

David's Repentance.

O R,

A plain and familiar

EXPOSITION OF THE LXI. PSALM.

First Preached, and now Published
for the benefit of God's Church.

*Wherein every Christian may set before his eyes
the pattern of unfeigned Repentance.*

Likewise exhorting every man to labor for Repentance
before Sickness and Death seize upon them; for after
Death there is no Repentance to be had or expected.

The Two and twentieth Edition.

Newly revised, and profitably amplified by the
Author, *Samuel Smith*, late Preacher of the
Word at *Prittlewell in Essex*.

Luke 13. 5. Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.

L O N D O N,

Printed by T. H. for T. Paffenger at the Three
Bibles on London-Bridge, and J. Wright, at
the Crown on Ludgatt-Hill, 1682.

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1687
566 210

"At that time also God was pleased to comfort and settle me by the acquaintance of some learned pious
and divine; especially old Mr. Samuel Smith, son
of Pittleville in Essex, but then of Chipping in
Essexshire, [who hath written on the 6th of Moses, the
first Psalm, the 23d Psalm, the 57th Psalm, the
90th Psalm, the Emanuel's Conversion, Noah's Ark,
the Great Assize, and other Books] His goodman was
one of my most familiar friends, in whose company
I took very much delight: Who in, bound but
this winter 1684, at his native place at Duxbury, after
death."

Richard Baxter, Life by Sylvestr. q.

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N. York, 1829.

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17. 15

DAVIDS

Repentance;

OR

A Plaine and
Familiar Expo-
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L. Psalme:

First Preached &
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CHURCH

Most needfull for the
times. by Jamſell
Smith, late Preacher
of the word of God at
Prittonall in Essex.

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LONDON
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and J. Wright.

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1897
MARCH

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CIGAR O.

1897 MARCH 1897

TO THE
CHRISTIAN
READER.

Christian Reader, seeing the burthen of the Ministry is this, to pluck men out of the Kingdom of Satan, and to bring them to the living God; surely then it is the duty of all those that have taken upon them this holy Calling, to help forward this worthy work: And to this end I entertain'd my spare hours in the time of my long Sickness (when I was not able to perform my duty in the Congrega-

A - tion

To the Christian Reader.

tion of my charge) in publishing this short Exposition of the LI. Psalm to the view of the World, not for Vain-glory, or for any good conceit or opinion that I have of the same, or of my self, as he knoweth that knoweth all things: But chiefly for the honour of God, that if it please the Lord to give a Blessing to it, sinners, even such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of Death, might be moved to Repentance. It is an opinion of carnal men, who remain under Satan and his dominion, (as all men do by nature) that when sin is committed, done, and past, they shall never be called to account for the same. But (alas) no length of time can wear sin away, if it be not taken away by true and unfeigned Repentance; yea, the sins of our youth, which many years ago we have committed (if now in

time

To the Christian Reader.

time we do not repent, and stop the mouth of the same ; shall stand up as new and fresh against us as the first hour we committed them. O that we could be wise to think on these things ! Our selves wax old, our bodies declining to the Grave ; and will we take no pains to wash away our sins, but let them stand in their strength against us ? This is a great folly. Let men therefore think of this betimes ; there is no going to Heaven with dry eyes, or on beds of Down. Now if this poor work of mine may find entertainment with thee, I shall so much the more be encouraged to take pains in this kind or other places of Scripture, as upon the first Psalm, which I have now Published, with many other : And withal, may help thee forward to this necessary duty of Repentance, I have then my desire. Give the

praise

To the Christian Reader.

praise to him from whom all good cometh, who worketh in us the will and the deed; to whom be Praise and Honour for ever and ever. Amen.

Thine in the Lord,

SAMUEL SMITH.

THE

THE TABLE: Out of the Title of the Psalm.

Page 1, 2, 3.

- 1 Singing of Psalms an ancient practice in the Church of God. Page 5
- 2 A child of God may fall, after he is effectually called. 12
- 3 The Word preached, the ordinary means to beget faith and repentance. 17
- 4 A fearful thing to live in sin without repentance. 20
- 5 Ministers must reprove the greatest personages. 25
- 6 Men must be charged with their special sins. 31
- 7 Chaste speech taught of God. 34
- 8 The godly respect more the glory of God than their own credit. 35
- 9 The strongest may fall. 36

The Table.

Verse 1.

- Doct. 1. Sight of sin, the first step to repen-
tance. 46
2 Sorrow for sin, note of a godly man. 51
3 Mercy is chiefly to be sought for 53
4 God alone is to be prayed unto 56
5 Experience of former favour affureth of
future. 60
6 The mercy of God emboldens penitent
sinners to come unto him. 62
7 God's mercy man's merit. 65
8 The nature of sin. 68
9 God a God of infinite mercy. 70
10 The Lord keeps a Book of all our sins
73

Verse 2.

- Doct. 1. A wounded conscience can find no
rest, but only in Christ. 80
2 A difference betwixt the sorrow of the
godly and the wicked. 83
3 Sin defiles the whole man. 88
4 Hard matter to be cleansed from the pol-
lution of sin. 90
5 Blood of Christ alone doth wash away
sin. 94

Verse 3.

- Doct. 1. Confession ever goes before remis-
sion. 97
2 An accusing conscience the means to bring
men to repentance. 108
3 Necess-

The Table.

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 3 Necessary duty to call our sins to account. | 113 |
| 4 Sin once known doth continually accuse till it be pardoned. | 116 |
| 5 One sin never goes alone. | |

Verse 4.

- | | |
|---|-----|
| Dott. 1. A man's sins are open before God. | 124 |
| 2 What sorrow it is that accompanies repen-
tance. | 127 |
| 3 Note of a penitent person, not to excuse
his sin. | 131 |
| 4 God alone can forgive sins. | 134 |
| 5 Acknowledgment of particular sins requi-
red in true repentance. | 143 |
| 6 Men sin before Almighty God | 149 |
| 7 The Lord maketh good use of our consci-
ences. | 152 |
| 8 God is ever just in his judgment. | 155 |

Verse 5.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| Dott. 1. A man doth never truly repent till
he come to know his own nature. | 166 |
| 2 No man is born by nature the child of
God. | 167 |
| 3 Godly parents beget sinful children. | 171 |

Verse 6.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| Dott. 1. True knowldg of God works true
humility. | 175 |
|--|-----|

The Table.

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 2 | A sanctified heart the greatest blessing of God. | 169 |
| 3 | Sin is but a lying vanity. | 171 |
| 4 | A fearful thing to sin against knowledge. | 173 |
| 5 | Heavenly wisdom the gift of God's Spirit. | 177 |

Verse 7.

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|-----|
| Do ^{it} . | 1. Pardon of sin the greatest mercy. | 181 |
| 2 | 2 Sin is infectious. | 183 |
| 3 | 3 The Ceremonies under the Law were but to lead us to Christ. | 185 |
| 4 | 4 Christ's blood alone doth purge our sins. | 186 |
| 5 | 5 Salvation to be sought for only in Christ. | 189 |
| 6 | 6 Sin defiles a man. | 192 |
| 7 | 7 Natural men their estate described. | 194 |

Verse 8.

- | | | |
|--------------------|--|-----|
| Do ^{it} . | 1. Assurance of the pardon of sin may be obtained. | 203 |
| 2 | 2 Man's testimony of the remission of sin is nothing without the testimony of God's holy Spirit. | 205 |
| 3 | 3 Ministry of the Word; means whereby God conveys comfort to his children. | 209 |
| 4 | 4 Where sin is not pardoned, there can be no true joy. | 211 |
| 5 | 5 No sorrow in the godly like the sorrow for sin. | 215 |

6 There

The Table.

-
- | | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 6 | There is no respect of persons with the Almighty. | 217 |
| 7 | Pardon of sin brings true joy. | 218 |

Verse 9.

- | | | |
|----------|--|-----|
| Doct. I. | God's anger most fearful to the godly. | 221 |
| 2 | Manner of God's pardoning sin. | 226 |
| 3 | All our sins known to God. | 229 |

Verse 10.

- | | | |
|----------|---|-----|
| Doct. I. | Justification and Sanctification go together. | 232 |
| 2 | Repentance a new Creation. | 234 |
| 3 | True sanctification is never in part. | 237 |
| 4 | God is the Author of Sanctification. | 241 |
| 5 | Sin hinders the work of sanctification. | 243 |
| 6 | A child of God not always at one stay. | 248 |
| 7 | A purpose not to sin, mark of a sanctified heart. | 249 |
| 8 | Sin quenches grace, as water fire. | 252 |

Verse 11.

- | | | |
|----------|---|-----|
| Doct. I. | The pleasures of sin are dear bought. | 258 |
| 2 | The judgments of God upon others cause the godly to fear. | 268 |
| 3 | Sin takes away the feeling of God's favour for a time. | 269 |

Verse

The Table.

Verse 12.

- Doct. 1. Fruit of sin described. 293
2 Favour of God is a Christian's chiefest joy. 296
3 State of God's children not always alike. 299
4 Pardon of sin the soundest joy. 301
5 Man weak being left unto himself. 304

Verse 13.

- Doct. 1. The goodness of God towards ourselves must be made known. 308
2 Thankfulness a necessary duty. 309
3 Fruit of Faith to seek the good of others. 312
4 What Doctrine Ministers must teach. 314
5 Ignorant people are to be taught the ways of God. 316
6 Conversion of a sinner is God's work. 317

Verse 14.

- Doct. 1. Murther a hainous sin. 321
2 God hath mercy for such as seek mercy 324
3 Punishment of sin should keep us from sin. 326
4 Note of a true penitent to aggravate sins. 329
5 Faith required in Prayer. 329
6 Praise our salvation properly belongs to God. 332
7 God's

The Table.

7	Gods mercy must make our hearts to praise him.	333
8	God should not be righteous, if he should not pardon sin.	336
	<i>Verse 15.</i>	
Doct.	1. Sin takes away the use of the tongue that man cannot speak as he should.	338
2	No ability in a man to perform any good.	341
3	Thanksgiving a necessary duty.	343

	<i>Verse 16.</i>	
Doct.	1. A man's person must first be appro- ved before his sacrifice be accepted.	349
2	A man may perform a good duty, and yet sin in the manner of doing it.	400
3	Popish sacrifices abominable.	352
4	Christ an end of all other sacrifices.	353

Verse 17.

Doct.	1. Broken heart, a most rare thing to be found.	405
2	God doth highly esteem of a broken heart.	409

Verse 18.

Doct.	1. Prayer the chief refuge in the time of danger.	363
2	Prayer for the Church a necessary and ho- ly duty,	366

The Table.

-
- 3 Liberty of preaching, one of the Almighty's favours. 349
 - 4 Faith must not rest upon the merits of another. 351
 - 5 Sins of the Magistrates provoke and stir up the Almighty's anger highly. 357
 - 6 A true penitent will seek to build up that which before he had pulled down. 359
 - 7 A man cannot truly pray till he repent. 360

-
- Doc. 1. What be those sacrifices that God doth accept of. 363
 - 2 Solemn vows of a Christian duty. 368
 - 3 Publick thanksgiving after deliverance required. 370

T H E

The Contents.

Psalm 51.

To him that excelleth. *A Psalm
of David, when the Prophet
Nathan came unto him, after
he had gone in unto Bathsheba.*

1. *H*ave mercy on me, O God, according to thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of thy compassions put away mine iniquities.
2. *W*ash me throughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sins.
3. *F*or I know mine iniquities, and my sin is ever before me.
4. *A*gainst thee, against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight : That thou mayest be just when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.
5. *B*ebold, I was born in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
6. *B*ebold,

The Contents.

6. Behold, thou lovest truth in the inward affections : Therefore hast thou taught me wisdom secretly.

7. Purge me with Hysop, and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than Snow.

8. Make me to bear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

9. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

11. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

12. Restore me to the joy of thy Salvation, and establish me with thy free Spirit.

13. Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

14. Deliver me from blood, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing joyfully of thy righteousness.

15. Open thou my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall shew forth thy Praise.

16. For

The Contents.

16. For thou desirest no sacrifice, tho
I should give it : Thou delightest not in
burnt-offerings.

17. The sacrifices of God are a con-
trite spirit : A contrite and a broken heart,
O God, thou wilt not despise.

18. Be favourable unto Sion, for thy
good pleasure, build up the walls of Je-
rusalem.

19. Then shalt thou accept the sacri-
fice of righteousness, even the burnt-offer-
ing and oblation. Then shall they offer
Calves upon thine Altar.

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A
PLAIN and FAMILIAR
EXPOSITION
 UPON
The LI. Psalm :

First Preached, and now
 published for the benefit of
 God's Church, &c.

PSALM LI.

The Text.

*To him that excelleth : A Psalm of David, when
 the Prophet Nathan came unto him, after he
 had gone in unto Bathsheba.*



Oncerning the Book of the Psalms, it is an Epitome of the whole Scriptures, teaching us what we are to believe, and do, both to God and man. In which, as in a glass, we may clearly behold the Nature of God, his wisdom, goodness, and mercy towards his Church and his Children : as also most notable spectacles

of his fearful wrath and vengeance against the wicked and ungodly.

If men would pray unto God, and crave for any mercy and blessing at his hands, here be excellent platforms of true, hearty, and most earnest prayers. If men would give thanks for any blessings received, for judgments escaped, or for deliverance from wicked and ungodly men, here be worthy examples and directions: if men would find comfort in temptations, troubles and afflictions, and learn with patience to bear them, there is no part of the Bible more sweet and comfortable. And therefore it should be our delight and study, and we ought to spend the more time in reading, and also in the meditation of so excellent and worthy a Book, according to that of our Saviour, *John 5. 29. Search the Scriptures:* because that will bring a man to true happiness in the end, namely, to know God to be his Creator, to know Jesus Christ to be his Deliverer, to know himself, and to direct him in that narrow path that shall lead unto life.

I thought good to speak of this Psalm, because it containeth in it a most worthy example, of true and unfeigned repentance, without which there is not, nor can be any pardon of sin: *except ye repent, ye shall all perish.*

Now it containeth a famous and most worthy example of repentance, if you either regard the person, who was a renowned and eminent King of *Israel*, a holy Prophet of God; yea, a man after Gods own heart.

Again,

Again, in the matter of the Psalm, and of his repentance, you shall see a spectacle of two great and grievous sins committed by *David*, wherein we may also see the great frailty and weakness of God's children by nature, which may teach us to pray unto the Lord for the Spirit of corroboration; for if *David* fell, who was a holy man, whether shall we fall who are great sinners, if God do but a little leave us to our selves? And howsoever by the special mercy of God towards *David*, this sin of his prevailed not to his eternal condemnation, yet we see what terror of conscience and grief of heart he sustained, before he could be assured of his former comfort. And this shall all flesh find, that the pleasures of sin for a season here, will bring with them sorrow in the end, a thousand tears and sighs for one sin of pleasure. As for the repentance of *David*, we shall see it most excellent and admirable, for he doth freely and truly confess his sins, and is not ashamed to Chronicle them even in the Word of God, for all posterity to read and peruse. And lastly, we shall see the endless love and mercy of God towards poor and miserable sinners, when they shall truly repent and seek for mercy.

The whole Psalm contains two Parts: First, the Preface of the Psalm, shewing the occasion of it. And by whom it was penned; and secondly, the Psalm it self, which contains in it nothing else but a most earnest prayer of *David*, as a poor prisoner arraigned and condemned at the Bar of God. And the Petitions of the Psalm are two-fold: First, there

Dividing
of the
Psalm.

be some concerning David himself, to the eighteenth verse : And secondly, some concerning the good of the whole Church in general; because his sin had endangered not only his own estate, but even the good and flourishing estate of the whole Church of God, and his own Nation.

In the Preface or Title of this Psalm.

First, mark to whom this excellent Psalm was committed, *To him that excelleth* : or, *To the excellent Musician*.

Secondly, by whom it was penned, *A Psalm of David*.

Thirdly, the circumstance of time when it was penned, *When Nathan the Prophet came unto him*.

Then fourthly, the occasion of it, namely, *Nathan's message from the Lord, sharply reproofing David's sins, namely, adultery and murther*.

To him that excelleth, or to the excellent Musician.

The Prophet David, when he had written any Psalm for the comfort and benefit of the Church of God, was wont, as it seemeth, to commit them unto those men who were appointed Masters of the Musick, wherein they did sing in the Temple to God's glory, *Heman, Asaph, Corah, Jeduthun, &c.* And therefore David and Solomon were commanded of God to appoint some Companies of Musicians to sing unto God : these were the Masters of the Musick, to set the Tunes, and dispose them. You must understand now David was not the Author of all these Psalms, though they

First, to whom this Psalm was committed.

1 Chr. 15.

1 Chr. 9.1.

they be called *David's Psalms*, but some other Saints and holy men did pen some of them as well as he ; but *David*, being a man after God's own heart, did cause them to be gathered and collected, and called them his Psalms.

From hence, that *David* did commit this Psalm and the rest to the Masters of Musiek, to be sung in the Churches of God to his glory; and especially this 51. Psalm being one of the seven Penitential Psalms, or rather a Psalm of Psalms, for comfort to an afflicted mind ; therefore was this Psalm placed by the wisest in the midst of the other penitential Psalms, even as the Sun is placed in the midst of the Firmament. Likewise we learn, that the singing of Psalms in the Assemblies and Congregation of God's people, is not only an ancient custom of the Church of God, but very lawful and commendable ; used as we see here in the days of *David* and *Solomon*, and commended them to God. Now the Birds, which are but poor creatures in respect of man, should stir us up to sing Psalms : as St. *Ambrose* reports, it should make a man to blush when he considers how the Nightingale and Lark every morning and evening sing out their Notes to the glory of their Maker, and man so much to neglect his Maker, as not morning and Evening to sing praises unto his holy Name. It is God's own command that we should sing, and therefore it is good. The Book of Psalms is called the Song of Heaven, and the Key to Paradise ; and when we sing these Psalms, 'we must do it with the duty of holiness and obe-

Doct. 2.
Singing
Psalms an
ancient
practise.
*Toe 7 Peni-
tential
Psalms.*
Psal. 6.
Psal. 32.
Psal. 38.
Psal. 51.
Psa'. 10.
Psal. 130.
Psal. 143.

Acts 16.

25.

Col. 3. 15.

1 Cor. 14.

dience. David he was stiled the sweet singer of Israel; O, saith he, sing praises, sing praises to our God upon a ten stringed Instrument. In the Church triumphant, there they sing Hallelujah to the Almighty, and in the Church Militant we sing, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. So it was the usual practice of Christ and his Apostles to sing Psalms or Hymns after they had eaten; and it is said of Paul and Silos, that being in prison they sung Psalms at midnight in the stocks, even there they sung Psalms to God: the Virgin Mary she sung, My Soul doth magnifie the Lord; and so likewise of old Simeon, Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: so in David, I will sing a new song unto the Lord; and in the days of the Apostles it was used, as Paul shews, commanding the Colossians, and all Christians to use this holy exercise: *Admonish your selves in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing with a grace to the Lord in your hearts.*

This then should stir us up to the more careful practice of this godly duty, and it condemns the prophaneness of those scoffing wretches, who mock, as at all other duties of God's people, their prayer, hearing, reading, exhorting, &c. so at their singing of Psalms. Alas, these prophanes men, and graceless wretches, having no grace in their hearts, they see not, nor perceive not the inward comfort which Gods children find in singing of Psalms unto their God.

But some may say, I could never receive any such spiritual joy in singing of Psalms. It may be so, and thine estate is so much the more

more to be feared. As the Prodigal Son in the 15. of St. Luke did know it, and enjoy it ; so the eldest Son asked what manner of joy it is ? And so many worldlings ask, *quale gaudium?* We answer, that which is known by taste, cannot by speech : so taste what joy it is, and then as Christ said, *I have bread to eat, and ye know not of it :* so may the Christians say, I have joy, and ye know not of it.

But because most men and women think it an excellent and comfortable practice, I will shew you how we ought to be qualified, lest we take more delight in the sweetness of the Musick, than in the comfort of the Psalm, we do but make a noise, and are like sounding brass, losing the benefit of singing, yea, take the holy Name of God in vain.

First, then, that we may sing to God's glory, and to our comfort, we must sing with the heart and with the understanding : so Saint Paul, Col. 3. 16. saith, *I will pray and sing with the spirit and understanding,* that is, with knowledge and understanding of that I sing ; and not as the Papists use, to roar in their Masses in Latin, so as none that hear them understand what is said, or what is done, nay, scarce themselves.

How to
sing aright.

Secondly, for the matter of our singing, it must be Psalms or Hymns, and spiritual Songs, not vile and filthy Songs which are the Devils Musick in the mouths of prophanes persons : wherefore let us put away all vile and filthy Songs, and let us chear up our spirit, and make our selves merry with David's Musick. As the Spirit of God hath given him the

name of the sweet Singer, so let his Musick be sweet in our ears, let us often sing this Psalm, and other his mournful songs, that we may be filled with the joy of the Spirit, as he was, and pass from hence into those eternal joyes whether he is entred, that so joyntly we may sing *Hallelujah* together.

Thirdly, we must not sing to spend the time, or to satisfie our ears with the noise or tune; but singing we must seek to express our thankfulness to God, to redeem the time, as St. Austin did, be not like the tinkling Cymbals, nor the Musick of Children. And therefore we must ever labour our selves to be affected in singing with cheerfulness unto God.

Fourthly, in singing, seeing it is a part of prayer, we must look to do it with all reverence as unto God himself: and as we would shew all seemly and decent behaviour when we thank our superiour for a good turn, so should we to God, and with more reverence. These things being duly considered, singing, it doth procure dignity and grace to the holy action, and much availeth to stir up the mind to true affection, and ferventness of prayer: but we must diligently beware, that our ears be not more bent to the note, than our minds to the spiritual sence of the words.

The second point in the Title of the Psalm, is the Pen-man of this Psalm, howsoever it was indited by the Holy Ghost, who was the Author of it, yet you see it was penned by *David*, a worthy and renowned King of *Israel*, a holy Prophet of God, a man after God's own heart,

By whom
it was pen-
ned.

1. Sam. 9.

14.

2 Sam. 13.

heart, endued with excellent and singular gifts and graces of God's holy Spirit.

Now from the Pen-man of this excellent Psalm, who was so worthy a King and Prophet, and containing in it such excellent and necessary matter, it ought to move us to the great liking & regard of this excellent Psalm ; for we will listen to the speeches of learned men : their counsels, and their exhortations, being wise, grave, godly, and learned, do most affect us. Lo then, here is a Psalm, penned by a most skilful Musician, by a renowned King, and worthy servant of God : Yea, a man after God's own heart. Now the person that wrote this Psalm, should move us very often to the liking of the matter contained in this Psalm. *Ahab* said of *Micajah*, he never prophesied good : So *David* the sweet Singer of *Israel*, always good : *The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever.* He was loved of God, the anointment spiritual and temporal doth verify it: Applauded of all, both men and women, *David hath killed his ten thousands* : A man justified of his enemies, *Thou art more righteous than I*; esteemed of his Subjects, *Thou art worth ten thousand of us.* A man more learned than his teachers. He was a compound of virtues, a man after God's own heart ; yet no way desiring the vain applause of men, confesseth here his sin, casting his Crown at the Lamb's feet, with the twenty four Elders, contending to give glory to God, that so he might find peace on earth. O what an excellent thing were this, if Kings, Nobles, and great men, would imitate *David* in this, to

Use. 1.

Psal. 119.
100.

call themselves to an account of their sinful and youthful crimes ; and to set down their lives, that so they might have matter to praise God for his blessings, and to acknowledge their sins with *David*. *David* then was the Author and Writer of this Psalm, yet *David* reports the fault in himself, as if some stranger had committed it : He forgets, as it were, his own people, and his Fathers house, setting all affection aside, maketh a plain declaration of his own transgression. *A wise man* (saith *Solomon*) *will accuse himself*, Prov. 18. So doth *David*, not shrowding his head, nor running into a Bush as *Adam* did, but writing his faults in his brow, and pointing with his finger at the Transgressor under his own name, saith, *A Psalm of David, being reproved by Nathan, &c.*

Writers of
the Scrip-
ture set
forth first
their own
imper-
fections.

And indeed this doth make greatly for the Authority of the Word of God, in that the Writers of it do not stick to set forth their own frailties and imperfections, that God might have the honour, and man bear the deserved blame ; contrary unto the manner of the Writers of this world, that howsoever against enemies they speak all, and more than all, or extol their friends to the highest, yet in them we find few examples in laying open the errors of themselves, especially when in any sort it may be concealed.

■ Sam. 1.

This course we may behold in the whole Scripture. *David* he recorded his Adultery, and Murther, as here in this Psalm, his repentance of them :

Zorab

Jonah his disobedience; *Job* his impatience; the Idolatry of *Solomon*; the discontentedness of *Moses*; the fretting of *Jeremy*, and the like. Here we may see the wisdom of the Word of Life; here we may admire their Spirits, who, to give God the glory, do rejoice in their infirmities, and proclaim their own follies. And if we would compare these Writers, inspired with the holy Ghost, with the Works and Writings of other men, we must either shut our eyes, or else acknowledg a difference.

The third circumstance is, the Time when this excellent Psalm was penned, and that is expressed, *when Nathan the Prophet came unto him*. Concerning the sense of these words, some men differ, Some think that *David* being fallen, lay in his sins a whole year without any touch of conscience, and sound repentance for them. But it is not like, as others think, that so worthy a man as *David* was, *after God's own heart*, could lye so long in sin without any remorse and touch of conscience. For my part, I take it, that though *David* could not be so stony and so steely hearted, or benummed, but must needs have some griping and sting of conscience; and no doubt his heart must needs smite him, unless he had been more forgetful than the vilest sinner. So, for all that he was not so humbled for his great and grievous sin as he ought to have been, till such time as *Nathan the Lord's Prophet* came to rowse him, by the alarm of God's Judgment denounced against him; wherein we may see first, that the child of God

Job 31.
1 Reg. 5.
Numb. 11
Note.

The time
when this
Psalm was
penned.

2 Sam. 21.

God may both fall foully, and lye in sin a long time without repentance : And secondly, that the Ministry of *Nathan* is needful to reclaim us, else we shall not only sin, but lye and wallow in them. And indeed, not so much the falling into sin, as the lying in sin, wounds the conscience, and procures God's judgments. God did not leave *David* without armour for his wounded conscience, when *Nathan* told him, *Thou art the man* : No, he gave him a heart to repent for his sin; for sin brings first repentance, and then repentance brings forgiveness. *David* presently confesseth, and saith, O Lord, I have done these secret sins which none but thy All-seeing eye can discern : *David* thought when he enjoyed the sweet water of content, and pleasure, that all was well; he did not remember that his sweet water must return to the Salt Sea again; for his little pleasure to have a World of sorrow.

Hence we may gather, first of all, for our great comfort, that it is the Lord's mercy, sometimes to let a man fall into sin. For as we build a wall the higher, by casting the foundation deeper: So the Lord by humbling his Children, oftentimes raiseth them up. As in a Tempestuous wind, Trees shaken by the root, in calm do spread themselves the more: so the child of God, having his root shaken, doth the more strongly fasten himself in Christ Jesus.

Note in *David*, a man after God's own heart, that the true child of God, after he is truly and effectually called and sanctified, may very

Doct.
The child
of God
may fall
after he is
called.
Gen. 37.

very dangerously fall, and sin against God, even as David himself did: so Joseph's brethren, how did they conspire against, to sell him? yea, to kill him? and lay a long time, yea, almost twenty years in that sin before they were truly humbled for it. How foully did Peter fall, though he did not lye long in sin? for the Text saith, *as soon as he heard the cock crow, he remembred the words of his Master, so he went out, and wept bitterly;* And as the Judgment-hall was a place of finning, so it was a place of repenting; but he went out presently, and wept bitterly. And as Clements Alexandrinus doth testifie, he wept so sore, that he made dents and furrows in his cheeks, with the tears that did fall from his eyes; yea, his repentance was so great, that he leapt into a Sea of tears, when he denied Christ. St. Peter he wept for his sins bitterly; he wept, and mingled with his tears, the gall of an holy and spiritual revenge and anger, for the sin he committed, and the good he had omitted. So likewise St. Paul, when he saw his sin of cruelty, blasphemy, and persecution of the Church of God, what revenge did he take upon himself; in watching, and praying, and fasting, and in labouring to build up the Church of God again, which he before had pulled down, even to the hazard of Life, both by Sea and Land; by Thieves and Robbers, and divers other perils. Thus man, for a little pelf, runs himself into a world of dangers; and for a momentary pleasure, hazards his Soul to eternal perdition, by the uncleanness of his heart. Yea, as Job saith, *Job. 15. What is*

Mat. 26.
70.

man

man that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman, that he should be just : Behold, he found no steadfastness in his Saints, &c. And, Pro. 20. 9. Who can say, I have made my heart clean ? All which testimonies of Scripture serve to confirm the truth of this Doctrine, that the best of God's Saints in this Life, are oftentimes overtaken by the policy of Sathan, and the frailty of their own flesh, to commit great and grievous sins : Yea, the dearest of God's children sometimes are asleep, Matthew 25. The wise and foolish Virgins both slept. But yet here is the difference; the wise awaked, arose out of their security ; the foolish prolonged the time. O then, if Christ Jesus have looked upon us, as he did upon Peter, let us look upon our selves ; if Nathan be come, let us sleep no more.

Use 1.

Seeing that God's Children may thus fall into sin, and lye in sin so long a time ; although no man may hereby be emboldened to sin with David, much less to lye in sin without repentance ; Yet we find, that such hath been our security, and exceeding carelessness, that God leaving us in his just judgment, we have sinned, and lain in sin a long time, a year or two, or ten ; yet if we can repent, and truly turn to God, as David did, we need not to doubt but he will shew us mercy, as to David. At what time soever. The Lord limits no time, if men do repent truly ; but if men shall defer their repentance in hope of this, that they may repent hereafter, then let them take heed lest the Lord cast them off ere they be aware, or else leave

leave them to hardness of heart, and impenitency, like *Pharaoh*, like *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*; or like *Herod*, or like *Ananias, and Sapphira*. And there is a great difference between this, when a man hath lain in sin, and the time is past; and when a man commits sin, and defers, in hope of time to come.

Here we may see the difference between this life and the life to come. Here in this life, the remnants of sin, as so many spots and stains in the flesh, remain even in those which are cleansed by the blood of Christ: But when as the faithful shall be glorified, they shall then be found unblameable, without spot or blemish. If we shall now cast our eyes even upon the best of God's holy servants, as *Noah*, who forgot himself, and drank too much Wine, so that he was overcome by it. *Abraham* had his infirmity, giving at first little or no credit to what the Lord had told him; that his Wife *Sarah* should bear a Son. *Lot* had his weakness of nature also, in committing incest with his Daughters. *Joseph* had his weakness also, for no sooner is he become a Courtier, and in *Pharaoh's* Court, but presently he learns to swear, by the life of *Pharaoh*. *David*, who is the occasion and subject of our present discourse, had his failings, in killing *Uriah* with the Sword: Secondly, in taking *Uriah's* Wife to be his. *Peter*, he had his slips and infirmities, in denying his Lord and Master with oaths and curses, so that he must have a silly creature, a Cock, to put him in mind of his error. *Paul*, he had his natural passion of revenge burning in him, in getting Letters to persecute the Chri-

Gen. 9. 2.

Gen. 17. 17

Gen. 19. 33

Gen. 42. 15

2 Sam. 12. 9.

Mat. 26. 27.

Act. 9. 22.

Joh. 20.
27, 28.

Luk. 1.18.

Use 3.
Repentance
is not in
man's
power.

Christians at *Jerusalem*, and he must have a voice from heaven to convert him; but being converted, what a stout Souldier was he in fighting the Lord's Battels? St. *Thomas* he had his fault of infidelity, though an Apostle, and would not believe till he had felt and seen the wounds of his Master Christ Jesus, who confirmed and settled his faith, and then he could confess, and say, *My Lord, and my God*. Old *Zacharias* the Priest had his infirmities as well as the rest; for the Angel told him, that his Wife should conceive a Son; which he doubted of, and said, *Whereby shall I know this?* He must have an Angel to confirm it to him. Thus we may easily see shame in glory, darkness in light, folly in wisdom, infidelity in faith.

But when Christ shall appear, and we likewise participate with him in glory, we shall be made like unto him. Here we cease not to provoke God by reason of our sins, which continually we do fall into, which should be unto us as bitter as Gall or Wormwood: But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, and death shall be swallowed up into victory, then shall we cease to sin, and be as the blessed Angels in Heaven.

We see that repentance is not in man's power, but it is the special gift of God: For if the Lord had not sent *Nathan* to him, to awake his benummed conscience, alas, he had run on still in sin, he had lain and rotted in his sins: But the Lord sends his servant *Nathan* to admonish him, and to awaken him. And so the people of God acknowledge in many places of the

the Scripture, Convert thou us, O Lord, and we shall be converted. Again, Instruct them with meekness, proving if God will at any time give them repentance, that they may be saved. O then, seeing repentance is not in man's power, but it is the special gift of God, neither could David turn of himself, though he turned from God of himself: What madness then is it for men and women to defer all till the last gasp; saying, if they may have but three hours before Death they care for no more; as though they had repentance at command. But Oh thou vain man, see David, he fell by his own will, but could not rise by his own power: And art thou better than David? No, no; unless the Lord give thee repentance, thou canst never repent. Oh then seek at God's hands, and repent while the Lord calls, and offers thee the means: For first our persons must be accepted, and then our prayers God will hear, as he did David's; for David said, I have called upon thee in the time of trouble, and thou didst hear me.

Seeing that David repented not, till he was awakned and rowsed up by Nathan the Lord's Prophet and Minister, and thought himself safe, and that he had got Heaven; but he went towards Heaven even as Pharaoh's Chariots did after the Children of Israel, with heavy wheels, burthensome: But when he had notice of his sin, he then went light, and joyfully to meet his God, saying, I have sinned.

Hence I gather, that the word of God preached, is the means both to beget Faith and Repentance, and to increase and revive the same; for how had David gone on still in sin,

Jer. 31. 18.
2 Tim. 2.
25.

Man sins
by Nature,
but cannot
rise with-
out Grace.

Doct. 3.
The Word
preached,
the means
to beget
faith and
repent-
ance.
if

*Act. 2. 37.
Jer. 31. 29.*

Rom. 1. 16.

*Heb. 4. 12.
Eph. 1. 1, 2.*

if *Nathan* had not humbled him by the Word of God? It is able to break a stony heart, it is able to wound a heart of steel: For what heart can be more obstinate, rebellious, stubborn, stony and steely, than was the heart of the cruel Jews? Yet by Peter's Sermon they were pricked, and throughly wounded and humbled. Is not the word of Jehovah like unto fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the stone, It is able to break a stony heart, which is as hard as flint. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of God, because I know it is the power of God to Salvation to all them that beleeveth. It is compared to a sharp two-edged Sword; it is mighty in operation, and sharper than a two-edged Sword: It is able to give life to those that are dead in trespasses and sins.

So then we must acknowledg a perpetual necessity of the Word, to beget us, also to increase in us the graces of Faith and Sanctification, which without the use of the Word preached, are subject, if not to dying, yet to decreasing; if not to perishing, yet to diminishing. And from hence it is, that the Lord faith of his Vineyard, his Church, *Esay, 27. 3.* I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any assail it; I will keep it night and day.

We see by daily experience, that after our repentance, and the renewing of our minds, we are subject to stumble, and to fall into sin, and ready to lie long in it, as men cast into a deep and long sleep, if we be not awaked with the Lords Trumpet, as we may see by this present example of David, who was by the subtily

subtilty of Sathan surprized, and drawn to commit two horrible sins, Adultery and Murther, and lay a long space securely in them, until he was by the Prophet *Nathan* rowled up and recovered, 2 Sam. 12.

Wherefore, as there is a continual use and necessity of repentance, so is there a continual use of the Preaching of the Word, that we should not stand at a stay, but increase more and more, till we come to the fulness of the perfect age of Christ Jesus.

This serves to commend unto us the power of the Word of God, which is both able to kill sinners, and to make them alive again; and puts a manifest difference between the word of man, and the Word of God. All the wisdom, learning, eloquence, and wit of man, is not able to save a soul, to convert a sinner, only the Word of God can do it, even the plain and simple preaching of the Gospel can do it; *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.* Though nothing be more contrary to our nature than the Word of God, yet it doth by God's blessing convert us.

Well then, seeing *Nathan* is the messenger, and the means that God uses to reclaim David, thus sleeping securely in his sin, whereas the Lord could have converted him without *Nathan*'s help: We see then, that those men who do despise *Nathan*, and the Lord's Prophets and Ministers, must needs dye in sin, without any repentance, who cannot endure themselves to be admonished and reproved; even as a man having a long festered Sore, that is even rotted and putrified, he cannot abide

Us. I.

God's
Word on-
ly converts
2 Cor. 1.

15.
Pf. 19. 7.

Rom. 2. 14.

Us. 2.
Despisers
of the
Word
must needs
perish.

Note.

abide the Chirurgeon should touch it, or lance it : Alas, it will be his bane in the end. So is thy Soul sick, full of rottenness and corruption, and yet thou continuest in sin, and lyest therein, and wilt not suffer the Lord's Chirurgeons ? Thou canst not endure *Nathan* to be so busie with thy sins, what will follow but utter ruine of thy soul, and the bane of it ? A guilty Conscience betrays it self before it be examined, therefore God hath given man a Conscience, and placed it within him, as an eternal remembrancer ; which at one time or other breaks out, and cries guilty, when no man accuses him. And therefore, let all men be content to have their heart searched with the tents of the Law, to be ript up, and lanced till the blood follow, for this is the next way to be cured.

Doct. 4.
A fearful thing to live in sin without repen-
tance.

In *David*, observe what a fearful thing it is to lie in sin without repentance ; it is that which maketh a grievous wound in the conscience, draweth down many and grievous judgments of God, as in *David* ; he felt the smart of his sins a long time, yea, carried the scars of it to his grave, it was a clog unto him all his life. *Peter* committed a grievous sin in denying his Lord and Master ; yet he lying not in sin, repented presently, went out, and wept bitterly, and so had a Pardon. But lying in sin, is that which wounds the conscience, and draws down God's judgments both on soul and body, weakens our faith, makes us cold in prayer, and in holy duties. Yea, the wrath of God doth follow such as make no conscience of sin ; giving them over to

to a reprobate sence, to a slumbering spirit, and to hardness of heart, that they prove in the end to be past feeling, Rom. 1. 28. And surely it is just with God, that he should forsake them by his grace, who have forsaken him by their sins. This is that which the Prophet declareth concerning the secret judgment of God upon sinners, that do make shipwrack of Faith, and of good Conscience, Psal. 81. 11, 13. *My people would not hear my voice, and Israel would none of me; so I gave them up unto the hardness of their hearts, and they have walked in their own counsel.* Whence he shews, that seeing they would not be reclaimed and reformed, he suffered them to run their whole swinge unto all sin and wickedness. We must make hast from our sins, as Lot did from Sodom, lest we be consumed with them, as the Sodomites were; we must likewise make haste to repent, so as Zacheus did, who came down eagerly to entertain Christ. Sin is like a disease in the bones, it very hardly will be cured; for that which is bred in the bone, will hardly out of the flesh; Repentance is not so soon gotten as we imagine; it is dangerous to defer repentance; for delays in many things bring danger with them. Some think it time enough to repent when the Bell is tolling them out of the world we mistake it always, for sickness may so disable us, that we cannot be sensible of our own grief: That man that doth forget God when he is living, God will forget him when he is dead; for God prepared Heaven for the good, and the torments of Hell for the wicked.

ed. We must be like *Nazaman the Syrian*, in making haste to *Elisha* the Prophet; so must we make haste to Christ who is our Saviour, if we will have forgiveness of our sins; if we will enjoy Heaven, we must climb Heaven by our repentance: If we believe God will punish the wicked for their transgressions, why then do we provoke him to wrath, and cause him to punish us? It is long of our selves. If we will, like *Esau*, spend our time in pleasure, and in hunting, we must then with *Esau* lose the blessing; but if we will hearken to our Wife *Rebecca*, which is the Church, she will shew us quickly how we shall get the blessing. Late Repentance is seldom true, though Repentance may be never too late, if God shew mercy. Repentance cannot be good when it is deferred, and put off. We cannot have Repentance in a string, or at our own wills; therefore we must seek and labour for Repentance while we have time, strength of body and ability of mind; for after this Life expired, there is no repentance but in Hell with sorrow, and howling, and with gnashing of teeth. We must not, like the Papists, expect to have a Purgatory, and there to stay some certain time to repent, hoping some Pope or other to be present to seal us a Pardon, which is as much as if it were sealed with Butter: Being an invention only to delude poor people of the true way to Salvation, and of their money: They may as well look for a harvest of Corn upon a hedg of thorns, as for a Pardon or forgiveness of sins from them. For those that trust and seek to them for Pardons, do

do as many men do, who go to a Lottery, and venture a summe of money to get a Prize, and then thinks he hath amongst his Lots got something ; and when he openeth, he finds nothing but blank : Just so is it with their Pardons, of no value, all blank.

Hence we learn, what a dangerous thing it is to give any entertainment to sin ; it is like to a bold and shameless guest, who, if he be once invited, will be so hardy, that he will come again unbidden. It is like the breaking in of water, that can hardly be stopped. We may see this in the example of *Cain*, who was reproved of God, checked for his hatred against his Brother, and admonished to repent, Gen. 4. 8. But he hearkned not unto the voice of the Lord, but hardened his heart, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of his Brother. This appeareth in *Judas*; he entertained covetousness in his heart ; from covetousness he fell to plot with the *Pharisees*, from plotting, he proceeded to practising, and in the end he brake out to treason against his Lord and Master.

The like we may see of *Saul*; that as he fell away from God step by step, so did the Spirit of God forsake him: For as amongst all the blessings that God doth bestow upon the Sons of Men in this World, a soft and tender heart is one of the greatest which is soon made bleed, and brought to repentance and amendment of life, Ezek. 11. 19. So there can be no greater curse laid upon man, than to have a stony heart (like to *Pharaoh*) which every day doth heap up wrath against the day of wrath, Exod. 9.

Vsi 1.

Mat. 26. 1.

Well,

Vise 2.
Continu-
ance in sin,
most dan-
gerous.

Note.

Vise 3.

Well above all things let us beware how we lye and rest in sin. Indeed I confess the Lord might justly condemn us for the least sin we do commit ; but yet he doth not so much mislike us for sinning, as for lying in sin without repentance. When as we sin, and lye in sin, then we wound our conscience; then all grace will decay ; let a man try himself. When *David* had done this evil in committing adultery, and murther, and lay without repentance, how was his Zeal quenched ? how were his Prayers weakned ? how was his Heart cooled? how was his Conscience wounded ? Even so, do but try thy heart, if thou hast committed some evil, either by adultery, murther, lying, stealing, &c. When thou hast done this, how untoward and dull shalt thou be in holy duties, in Prayer, and praising of God ? And thou shalt find even a very hell in thy conscience for the present, and have no power to perform thy duty in thy profession.

Seeing it is so dangerous to lye in sin without Repentance, it is the very cut-throat of the soul, and of all good things : O then, if we do fall, as the best fall daily, yet let us presently recover our selves, earnestly repent, and cry out with the prodigal child, *Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and against thee.* And, with *Peter*, let us haftily go out, and weep bitterly, and then we shall not so deeply wound our conscience, nor draw down God's judgments, as when we lye and snort in sin securely, without Repentance. I am perswaded that many men will not go to Bed, till

till they have summed up their Shop-book, to know what they have taken all the day, and what they have got : And shall not man do so with God, who is but God's steward, cast up our sins, and reckon them to the full, what we have the same day before omitted and committed ? O let us do it, lest we be snatch'd away suddenly by Death and so perish everlastingily.

The fourth circumstance in the Title of the Psalm, is, the occasion wherefore this worthy Psalm was penned, which was this ; *Nathan's reproofing of David for going in to Bathsheba*; of which story read the second of *Samuel*, the eleventh and twelfth Chapters, and you shall see *David's sin*, and his repentance, being reproved. Whence, I pray you, mark two things, *David's patience* and *Nathan's boldness*.

David was a mighty King, a famous Warriour ; yet when the Lord's Prophet comes unto him, to reprove him, he takes it patiently, and most meekly endures it. One would have thought, that *David* should have checked him, and bid him hold his peace, and bid him meddle with his equals. But you see here, though he were reproved by *Nathan*, a poor Prophet of God, and that of a foul sin, he most patiently endures it.

Hence we learn, in *Nathan* and *David*, that the Prophets of God must not be afraid to reprove the greatest Personages ; but they must lay open their sins, and God's judgments against them. *Elias reproved Ahab*, *Moses Pharaoh*, *Paul Felix*, *John Baptist Herod*, &c. And

The occa-
sion
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Doct. 5.
Ministers
must re-
prove the
greatest
Personage:
1 Reg. 21
Mar. 6.

Psal. 141. 5

so, whosoever thou art, if thou were as great a King as David, if the Lord send his Prophet to tell thee of thy sins, thou art to take it as the message of the Lord, and not to storm against it. And this is the thing which the children of God desire, to have their sins laid open and reprobated. *Let the righteous smite me friendly, and reprove me:* For such smiting shall be good for me. And nothing is more dangerous for Kings, and great Personages, than to have their parasites and flatterers, who will wink at their sins. O, how had it been with David, if the Lord had not sent Nathan to reprove him!

We learn hence, in what a woful estate and condition those men and women are, that want a faithful Minister: They live in blindness and darkness, wanting the ordinary means of Life and Salvation: They have not the words of eternal Life, Job. 6. ver. 8. which are the power of God to Salvation. Rom. 1. 16. and therefore are neer unto Destruction. It was a fearful word which Christ said to his Apostles, Mat. 10. 5. Go not ye into the way of the Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans see that ye enter not.

And to the same purpose the Prophet Amos speaking, in his 8 Chap. 11, 12, 13. Behold, the day is come (saith the Lord God) that I will send a famine into the Land, not a famine of Bread, and a thirst of Water, but of hearing the word of the Lord, And they shall wander from Sea to Sea, from the North even unto the East, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, but shall not find it.

Oh

Oh that we would consider of these things, and lay before our eyes what hunger it is to want the preaching of the Word, that thereby we might learn to be thankful for God's mercy towards us, to be moved to pity the desolation of so many of our poor Brethren, as also to fear taking it away from our selves for our unthankfulness. Great are the Plagues, and horrible the ruins of the Church in many places. Oh that we had hearts to mourn for it, and we would pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest.

And surely this is a great plague and judgment commonly waiting upon great men, that they find few or none that dare admonish them of their faults, or tell them of their offences; and so many times are suffered to run on still in sin to their final destruction. And therefore let us account it as a special blessing sent unto us of God, where we have some godly *Nathans*, by whom we may see what is amiss in us. And *David* saith unto *Nathan*, *I have sinned against the Lord*. Now the cause how *David* came to commit this sin, was, by his idleness; for being upon the top of his House or Turret, lying on his Couch, and not being employed in the Law of God, nor in the affairs of his Kingdom, then came the Devil, and set his heart, eyes, and thoughts upon vanity, and so he committed this heinous sin of Adultery, in setting open the eyes of his body to his own will and desire. *David* must no more walk upon the top of his Palace, to view his stately City, unless he makes a covenant with his eyes, and shut and

vii 2.

keep out those temptations, which at the first led him to this error ; and which objects are daily offered to our view : For the acts of sin are only pleasant for the time, and then they vanish away, being rather a burden to us than otherwise. The Devil makes men commit sin, by laying his baits of pleasure in our way, making them sweet to our thinking, when indeed they are bitter and full of thorns. *Nathan tells him, saying, Thou art the man.*

We can give such a man thanks that will tell us of some spot in our faces, or blemish in our garments ; and shall we envy or malign him that will discover unto us the spots and blemishes of our souls, which do more soil and defile us, than all the blemishes of the body ? And *David*, when he had now found the benefit of a godly reprehension, being reproved by *Nathan the Lord's Prophet*, saith, *Psal. 141. 1. 5. Let the righteous smite me, for that is a benefit ; let him reprove me, and it shall be a precious Oyl that shall not break mine beard.* And to this end speaks *Solomon*, *Prov. 9. 7. Rebuke not a scorner, lest he hate thee ; but rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.* The correction of a Friend is as the rod of a Father, the end is not to destroy, but to save ; not to overthrow, but to deliver from death. God hath always his messengers in store, to send out to his people, to have them repent. God sent *Nathan* to *David*, God sent *Jonas* to *Niniveh*, God sent *John the Baptist* to the *Jews* ; and the first word that he spake to them, was, *Repent.*

This

This condemneth the spirit of pride in most men and women: For in these days it is come to pass, that great Personages, if *Nathan* do tell them of their sins, of their excessive ambition, idleness, vanities, uncleanness, and the like: Oh, these hot fellows are not for their humours, they cannot away with them; even as *Herod* in St. *Mark*, chap. 6. v. 20. Though otherwise he did reverence *John*, yet when he came to tell him of his incest and wicked life, then he must lose his head for it. And as *Abab* said of *Michaiah*, *I hate him, for he never prophesieth good unto me*: He is always threatening me, and telling me of my sins, and God's Judgments. So in these days, *Nathan* is the odious man of the world; men cannot brook this, to have *Nathan* so busie as to meddle with their sins; but men would fain be smoothed and daubed with untempered morter. But if the Lord loves thee, he will send *Nathan* to thee to reprove thee of thy sins; and if thou canst not find thy heart willing to hear *Nathan*'s reproof, as *David* did, it is because thy heart is naught, and it is a sign that God will reject thee and destroy thee. *David* did not lessen or excuse his sins, but he presently confessed them and humbly begs pardon for his sins.

Hence we learn, how to esteem of a faithful Minister, namely, as the servant of God; which if it be, then *Moses* must not be murmured at when he speaks freely, and roughly: And if *Michaiah* resolve of faithfulness, saying, 1 King. 22. *As the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord saith, be it good or evil, that*

Cor. 3.9.

will I speak. Why should he be hated, and be fed with the bread and water of affliction? Is it not a reasonable plea, and full of pacification in civil messages? I pray you be not angry with me, I am but a servant. Yea, *Jeremiah* the Prophet shall say, *Of a truth the Lord hath sent me*, Jer. 26. 15. his feet shall nevertheless be fastned in the stocks. Nay, this consideration should not only bind men to peace, from touching and doing the Lord's Prophets harm, but also urge them to have them in exceeding honour, at least for the works sake, which is the Lords, who doth acknowledge them coworkers with himself.

Last of all, this may serve to reprove those that bear the office of *Nathan*, yet have the Word in respect of persons, who dare not do their duties, but are afraid of mens faces: They would be accounted the Embassadors of God, but they are afraid to do their Master's message. Let such learn here of *Nathan*, who feared not the Majesty of a King, but was faithful in his Office. Let such learn of *John the Baptist*, who did not shrink back, but was bold to tell *Herod*, that it was not lawful for him to take his Brothers Wife. We must not be dastards, and faint-hearted Souldiers, to fight the Lord's Battle; but first be sure we have a good warrant out of the Word, and then go boldly into the field, and fear not to look the enemy in the face.

We are not our own messengers, to do our own Embassage, but the Embassadors of the eternal God; when he hath once put his Word into our mouths, we must go to those that

that he hath sent us. And whatsoever he commandeth us, that must we speak. *Jer. 1. 7.*

8. When God sent forth *Jeremy* to preach, he armed him thus; *Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee*, saith the Lord. Thus he armed *Ezebel*. *Ezek.*

3. 8, 9. *I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy fore-head hard against their fore-heads: I have made thy face-skin as the Adamant, and harder than flint, fear them not therefore, neither be afraid of their looks, for they are a rebellious house.*

Then hence we learn, That the most effectual means to pierce and wound men's consciences for sin, is, to charge them with their special sins, whereof they be guilty; not in general to reprove sin, but to rip up mens consciences, to come to particulars, to tell men of their peculiar sins and impieties, as *Nathan* did to *David*, in the Parable of the Sheep: *Thou art the man that hath done these things.* Even so the woman of *Samaria* did but dally with Christ, untill he came to tell her of her special sins; namely, That she was a vile, lewd and wicked woman, no better than a Whore or Harlot, and then she was tamed, and began to listen to Christ's Doctrine. So here, *David* was asleep in sin, till *Nathan* came unto him, and told him, *Thou art the man that hast committed adultery and murder.* And then began *David* to repent, and to beg pardon. So *Judah* could pass sentence upon *Thamar*, to be burned for Adultery, but never thought that his sin had been known; but when he saw the seal, the cloak,

Da. 6.
Men must
be charged
with their
special sins.

*2 Sam. 1.
Joh. 4. 9.*

Gen. 38.

Vſe I.

2 Sam. 11.

Note.

Gen. 3.

Vſe 2.

and the staff, then he can say, *She is more righteous than I*; when he was thus brought to light, and his sins laid in charge.

This may admonish all Ministers of the Word, that if they desire to convert men, and humble them for their faults, then to rip up mens consciences, to smite them, to press them with their sins, *Thou art the man*. For unless men be thus dealt withal, we see that self-love will cause men to put off one to another: That is a good lesson for such a man, I would he had heard it, and so clear themselves. For, as it was with David, *Judah*, and the Woman of *Samaria*, till men see their particular sins, as Swearing, Lying, Whoredom, Drunkenness, Ignorance, &c. they will not be humbled.

If this be the surest and safest way to humble men, to bring them unto true repentance for their sins, then you must be content to have your selves thus dealt withal, to have *Nathan* tell thee, *Thou art the man*: That *John* should tell thee of thy incest and uncleanness, and not to storm against it, nor to kick against the Word. For, this know, that if the Word of God be not an edged Sword to kill sin, and cut the throat of it, it will cut the throat of thy soul; it will not return in vain. O then, would you be saved by the Word? then let the Word pierce your hearts, and wound your souls. A man that is dangerous sick, will open his arm, uncover it, let the Chyrurgeon let him blood upon a vein, thank him and pay him for his pains. Well, our Souls be dangerously sick with sin, though we

we know it not; and we have many a deadly wound, though we feel it not: let us then lay them naked, and suffer the Lord's Chyrurgeon with the sacrificing Knife of the Word of God, to cut and launch them, if ever we look to be cured. Take heed you be not like unto *Abab* or *Herod*, but rather acknowledge it the endless mercy of God, which sends some *Nathan* to reprove you, and smite you. Alas, men will not endure this to be said, *Thou art the man*, to be told plainly of their sins; but it is the only way to save mens souls. And the least repentance is a new Life, and a strict course by circumspection for the time to come, desiring the Lord to forgive us our manifold sins; which manifold sins are great sins.

And therefore, let us all, young and old, rich and poor, noble and simple, be content to hear of our sins, and God's judgments against them: For, till that message be listened unto, there is no message from God of any pardon to be given, or mercy to be shewed, though it were to a King: Yet we see, *Nathan* being sent from the Lord, doth first his message of reproof, and heard that listned to before he utter any word of pardon. *David's* attention to the words of *Nathan*, open'd his ears; his intention, his heart, and his retention, his mind; as it did *Lydia's* at the Preaching of *Paul*.

When *David* had gone in unto *Batbshiba*: That is, after *David* had committed that foul and filthy sin of Adultery with *Bathsheba*.

1 Reg. 22.

3.
Mark 6.

Ps. 14. 1. 5.

Dott. 7.
Chast
speeches
taught of
God.

Col. 4. 6.

Eph. 4. 9.

Use 3.

Whence observe the great wisdom of the Spirit of God, who speaking of a foul and filthy fact, uses a reverend and chaste speech, very honest and decent. And therefore we learn. That as the Spirit of God speaks, so must we inure and acquaint our selves to speak : Yea, when we are to relate things that are not comely to be spoken, to moderate our speech, and to speak in an honest and a chaste manner. So the holy Ghost exhorts us, That our words should be gracious, and powdered with Salt, such as may minister grace to the bearers. But as for filthy communication, or foolish jesting, which is not comely, let it not be once named amongst you.

And this may teach us, that we must all diligently study and practise the government of the tongue, to order it aright in the manner ; which is a worthy study, according to that of the Prophet, Psal. 34. 12. 13. *What man is he that desires life, and loveth to see good days, keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile.* And to this purpose doth the Prophet David speak in another, Psalm, Psal. 39. 1. *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue, I will keep my mouth bridled, while the wicked are in my sight.* The holy use of the Tongue is the language of Canaan, Esa. 18. 19. which we must account to speak, that is may be ordered according to the Will and Word of God.

This condemneth the common abuse of mens Tongues, who do not only grievously blaspheme the name of God in swearing, but in

in most vile and filthy barbarous speech, such as would make any chaste ears to glow for shame, such unclean and polluted words from young and old, even from little Children and Infants, are so common, as must needs make a chaste mind to blush at them. And how could they do this, but that they hear it of their Elders, Parents, and others? I beseech you remember Paul's words, *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.* It is lamentable to hear that I have heard of your Children, most miserable and cursed oaths, and filthy speeches, even of those (which is strange) that can hardly speak. I pray you, for God's sake, look unto it; for if you suffer and give them liberty, they will be the cause of your woe in the end.

Here Mark, that *David*, a glorious and renowned King of *Israel*, is content to shame himself for ever, to have his sins recorded to his own shame, so that he may procure God's glory, and the good of his Church: For he was confident, that this example of his grievous fall being recorded in God's book, would turn by God's blessing to the endless comfort and good of his Church. For, what a singular comfort is this to God's children, when they shall remember, that the falls and slips of such worthy men are recorded in God's Book? And if this were not, our faith would fail, and we should even utterly despair.

And, as it was with *David*, so it is with all the Godly, if ever they felt the terror of an accusing conscience for sin, if ever they were displeased at themselves for offending

Eph. 4.19.

Doct. 8.
The godly
do respect
more the
glory of
God, than
their own
credit.

a good and gracious God, they will not then stick to manifest their own shame, "and proclaim their own folly with grief of heart, with the Leper in the Law." *Levit. chap. 13. v. 45.* *I am unclean, I am unclean,* that so they may procure their former peace with God, and give him glory by their repentance, as they dishonoured him by their sins : So that, where the Lord doth awaken the conscience, all excuses are set aside ; a man is glad to disburthen himself, by confessing his sin unto the Lord Almighty.

We learn by David's example, not to be unwilling to do that which may be for God's glory, and the good of his Church, though it shall be our utter disgrace in the World ; yea, even to shame our selves for ever, so as God may have his honour by us. Alas, we are so chary of our own credit, and so loath to shame our selves, that we will not acknowledg our sins and infirmities, though it might turn much to God's glory : But this let us know, that it is our duty to seek God's glory and the good of his Church, though we should even for ever shame our selves to the World. It is a shame to sin, no shame to repent ; yea, shame is the best fruit of sin : Neither is our shame increased by confessing our sins, but rather diminished, and taken away. And yet so nice are we, that we are loath to acknowledg our sin, without which there is no pardon of sin.

Rom. 8.

Doct. 9.
The strongest may-
fall.

From the persons that fell into this great sin of Adultery, namely, David and Bathsheba ; David, an excellent King and Prophet

of

of God, yea, - a man after God's own heart : And Bathsheba, no ordinary person, but a woman of great name, yea, a religious woman, (as it appeareth) wise and discreet. By this we may see, into how greate sins the children of God may fall, if the Lord leave them but a little to themselves ; as we may behold in *Noah, Lot, Paul, Peter* and the like.

Seeing it is so ; Oh, how should we watch over our ways? Though thou beest the child of God, yet see how thou mayest fall, if the Lord leave thee but a while : Oh then, *coun-terguard thy heart, &c.* Keep it with watch and ward, and look unto the casements of thy soul, thy ears and thy eyes ; by them was *David* overcome. What folly is it then in them who dare come into any company, that dare pry and look into the beauty of women, as though they were so strong, that they were out of all danger to sin ? But, art thou stronger than *David*? if not, thou maist fall.

Let all Ladies and godly women take heed, let them look on Bathsheba, a worthy Woman, and let them fear to give any entertainment of lust and uncleanness, for they may be sooner overtaken than they are aware of. Look unto thine eyes, and to thy company, lest thou be polluted by the society of un-chast persons, yea, it may admonish all men and women, though never so confident, chaste, religious, to fear themselves, and to cut off all occasions to uncleanness ; as pride in apparel, self-conceit, evil company, idleness, and

Prov. 31.

Vſe. 1.

Pro. 4. 23.

Notes.

Vſe 2.

Use 3.
Note.

and the like, which be fore-goers of this sin; yet none of these sins go alone, but some other sins do accompany them.

Last of all, let no unclean person ; man or woman, make *David's* nor *Bathsheba's* sins, a means to embolden them, or bolster them in uncleanness ; for, if thou sin, because such sinned, thou maist perish in them, like *Pharaoh*, *Corah*, and *Herod*. This is not the end why their faulcs be noted in the Book of God, for to uphold us in the like ; but rather to admonish us of our weakness, to cause us to watch, and be wary lest we fall, seeing such excellent ones have fallen.

As *David* went from one degree of sin to another, so God went from one degree of punishment to another. From sins of weakness, *David* went to the sin of malice ; from the sin of malice, to the sin of presumption. How industrious was *David* in studying and devising to send away *Uriah* with a Commission, to hasten his own innocent Death, the better to hide his adultery. And therefore, *David* poured out his penitential confession, saying, *Against thee, against thee only have I sinned : Against thee only* : for he was a King (saith St. Ambrose) not bound unto Law ; because, saith he, Kings are free from the bond of crimes, and are not called unto Punishment by any Law, being safe by the power of Command ; therefore *David* sinned not against man, unto whom he was not obnoxious in regard of punishment, but of admonition only and reproof, uttered in the name, and by the authority of God himself. Hereupon

Apol. David c. 4. l. 2
Epist. 7.

upon the Prophet *Nathan*, having used this preface, (Thus saith the Lord) admonished King *David*, that he should expiate his sin by repentance; but he gave no sentence against him, whereby, according to the Law; he might be adjudged unto Death: For if *Nathan* had giv'n any such sentence against *David*, he should have had power to deprive him of his Life; and so of that which he enjoyed by his Life, his Regal authority, which God only can take away from Princes, because he alone bestows it upon them. Oh then, let us imitate *David's* repentance, not his weakness. And so I come now to the Psalm it self.

Psalm 51. Ver. 1.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy compassions, put away mine iniquities.

Now follows the Psalm it self, and it is a most excellent Psalm to be learned of every Christian man and woman, and oftentimes to be used for our comfort; for it contains a most earnest prayer of *David*, that worthy Servant of God, and renowned King of *Israel*, a Prophet of God, and a man after his own heart.

Wherein he humbly doth acknowledg his sins unto the Lord, earnestly entreating for grace and favour at God's hands, for the true par-

pardon of them all, and to be comforted again by the gracious promises of God.

This Psalm may be divided into two parts: In the first part, *David* prayeth for himself, unto the 18 Verse; in the second part, he prayeth for the Church of God, that the Lord would be favourable unto Sion his Church, and build up *Jerusalem*.

The main thing which *David* so earnestly, and so often prayeth for, is mercy, and favour at God's hands, for the pardon of his sins, and this petition is repeated again and again joyned with great affection, and earnest desire of mercy, confessing his sins unfeignedly, and abhorring them.

Secondly, *David* prayeth unto God for the work of Sanctification, that the Lord would purge him, and sanctifie him by his holy Spirit, and renew his heart.

Thirdly, he promiseth to preach forth the mercy of God unto others; that his example shall be a means, by God's blessing, to convert them, to make them afraid of sin, and to comfort them that be fallen.

Fourthly, he shewed the great abuse of outward Sacrifices, and the outward worship and service of God; that if it be done by impure and impenitent sinners, alēs, the Lord takes no pleasure in it, but hates and abhors it.

In the first Verse, we are to consider; First what is the thing *David* begs, namely, mercy: Secondly, the person of whom he begs it, and that is of God, *Have mercy upon me*; O God: Thirdly, the means and greatness of this

this mercy, much mercy, and great mercy, because of his great misery ; and the doubling of this petition, shews, he prayed with great zeal and affection, (*Have mercy on me O God*) as if he should have said : O my God, I am a most vile and miserable sinner, I have committed very great and grievous sins, I stand in great need of thy mercy ; and therefore have mercy on me in the pardon of my sins. God's mercy is the girdle of heaven, which binds and lets loose all the blessings which man enjoyes on earth : His mercy endures for ever, saith the Psalmist. God's mercy is a spring which will never be dry, a fountain that will be always full ; his mercy is over all his works. Mercy is a sweet thing, it is the Worlds bond, which bears and holds it together, or else it would fall into a Chaos, or confusion. To reckon up all God's mercies, would even fill such a Volume as this themselves ; as likewise his loving mercy, his forgiving mercy, his increasing mercy, his hidden and compassionate mercy, his fatherly and affectionate mercy. All these mercies of God he sheweth to man, even while man is asleep, and takes his rest : For, doth not God shew his loving, his increasing, his tender and fatherly mercies, that while the Husbandman takes his natural repose, his corn and other grain encreaseth, and grows in the ground ; and all this is still God's mercy and favour to man, to incite, and to invite him only to give him thanks and praise ; nothing doth God else require of men, but only the heart : The first fruit of it, which is acknowledgment

ledgment and confession, that he is a God of power, and of mercy, and the Author of all goodness. *David* not only praiseth God himself for his mercy, but he calls on others to do the like. *O praise ye the Lord, for he is good : O all ye saints praise his holy name, for his mercy endureth from one generation to another :* First, his mercy in creating us. Secondly, his mercy in redeeming us. Thirdly, his mercy in sanctifying us. Fourthly, his mercy in preserving us from all dangers of body and soul, even to this present time.

Doct. I.
Sight of
Sin the first
step to Re-
pentance.

Luk. 15.

Rev. 3.10.

Before a man can either crave for mercy, and beg the pardon of his sins, he must have the sight of them, he must see the danger of them, and find himself to stand in extreme need of God's mercy. *David* had lain a long time in his transgression, and never sought unto God for mercy ; but being awaked by the reprobation of *Nathan*, now he cries for mercy, and God did hear him ; which, hearing of his request in Heaven, was an act of mercy in God : For, *David* had the wings of Faith, which carried his petitions to God, and he did believe that God would forgive him ; as those that have faith in their prayers, their prayers shall never return without a blessing. The prodigal Son, a true pattern for all sinners, he never seeks to his Father, till he was in extremis misery, and then he saith, *I will go to my Father.* So the proud Pharisee never begg'd for mercy, for he felt no want of it ; and the Church of *Laodicea* knew not that she was miserable, poor, blind, and naked. For how can a man repent of that

that he is ignorant of? Sins committed cannot be repented of, till men see them, and know them; nay, nor barely to know them, but to know the hainousness of them, and the curse of God due unto them; so as a man may take it to heart, and be troubled for his sins. *David*, though a prophet of the Lord, yea, a man after God's own heart, yet lay a long time in sin without repentance, because he did not weigh and consider with himself what he had done; and therefore in the word of God, the Lord oftentimes calls upon men to consider their ways, to know their sins, and the curse of God due unto them. *Jer. 3. 13. Know thy sins, O Jerusalem. Zeph. 2. 1, 2. Fan your selves. Lam. 3. 40. O let us search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord.*

Here we may see the main cause, why there is little faith and true repentance in the World, why men are no more humbled for their sins, and do not repent of them; poor souls, they know not that they do evil: They either cannot, or do not search themselves, *Lam. 3. 40.* They never call their hearts to account. Now then, going on in security, seeing and fearing no danger, alas, how should they repent? how should they turn to God? For, if thou couldest see the misery of thy soul, and thy woful estate by reason of sin; if thou couldest see the number and greatness of thy sins, Oh! thou wouldest even tremble for fear, and wonder at thy woful estate. But alas, most men are like a man that travels in the night over a narrow

Vſe I.

row Bridge, which is very dangerous, and under it runneth a bottomless Gulph, so as if he fall, he cannot escape, but must needs perish ; and therefore in the dark night, seeing not the danger, he feareth it not : But let him go that way in the morning, he will wonder that ever he was so mad and desperate to go that way, and will never venture that way again. So, many poor, blind ignorant Souls, when they have run headlong into sin all their days, and passed their uncertain Life in ignorance, prophaneness, and manifold sins, posting to hell and damnation, not seeing the curse of God that doth hang over their heads, they fear nothing, but run on head-long into all sin : But if it please the Lord to open their eyes to see their sins, and the judgments of God due unto them ; Oh ! they do wonder at their own extrem folly, and God's infinite goodness and patience, and would not be in that case again for all the World.

Well then, mark this doctrine, do not lightly pass it over, but esteem it as a blessed truth of God. Christ saith, *Luke 13. 5. Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.* And for a man to behold his sins, the greatness and grievousness of them, it is the first step unto repentance. So that we see here, who they are that do repent, and shall be saved ; even such as see their sins, and their woful misery, and the wretched estate wherein they are, and which do most earnestly hunger and thirst after mercy in Christ.

Well

Well then, let me ask thee this question, or rather demand thou it of thine own soul : Didst thou ever see thy woful misery, that wretched estate wherein thou art by reason of thy sin ? what a miserable transgressor thou art by nature, out of the favour of God, in the estate of damnation, in extreme danger for ever to be damned, and to lose thine own soul ? Didst thou ever find thy self to stand in need of God's mercy for the pardon of thy sins, and extream want of Christ's blood to save thy soul ? Hast thou felt thy heart wounded and bruised for thy sins, that thy soul is even sick with sin ? Didst thou ever thirst after God's mercy in Christ above all the World, so as thou hast with sighs and groans, yea, with tears begged God's mercy on thy knees, as for life and death ? *John* felt 7 Chap. If thou hast not found and felt these things in thee in some measure, thy case is dangerous and fearful ; thou didst never yet truly repent ; the mercy of God belongs not unto thee.

Now *David*, he repented presently, at the very instant of time ; he did not stand to argue the case, but he confessed his sins, and upon his confession, God's mercy did grow and increase upon him, even as the Husbandman's corn doth grow in the ground when he is asleep : Such was God's love and mercy to *David* upon his humility : And if we will not repent and go to Heaven by example, we must expect to go to Hell with company.

O then, it is a singular favour of God, when he does open a man's eyes to see his misery, to find himself to stand in need of God's mercy, and extream want of Christ's blood to save his soul : This is the beginning of all grace, to feel the want of grace. *David*, if the Lord had not rowfed him out of his deadly sin, wherein he lay a long time, he might have perished in it. And therefore, this should teach us all to pray to God, that he would in mercy open our eyes that we may see our sins, and feel our miseries, and that we may see we stand in extream need of God's mercy. On the contrary, it is a fearful plague and judgment of God, for men to lye and snort in sin, without remorse of conscience, without the sense and feeling of sin, or want of mercy. This *David* now knew by woful experience, that if he had dyed without repentance, he had perished. Of all diseases, they be most dangerous, which be least felt, as the Letthargy, or dead Palsie, or the like. So it is a most fearful estate, for any man to lye in sin without the least feeling of it ; for then the heart is hardened, and he makes no account of God's mercy. A man that thinks he is well enough, will scorn the Physician. So those blind sinners, that think they are well enough, and feel no want of mercy, of all men they are to be pitied ; they be in a most dangerous state and condition : And therefore we see it is a great blessing of God, to be told of our sins, to be reproved for them, that so we seeing them, and the danger

ger of them, we may seek to God for mercy. God's mercy was great, saith St. Augustine, to the Israelites, who gave them a dry and a miraculous passage through the Red Sea, in heaping up the waters like walls about them; and at the same time gave their enemies a watry Sepulchre; they were like the Sword-fish, who hath a weapon, but wanted a heart, they could do them no hurt; for God's mercy did defend them, and protect them on all sides. God's mercies are manifold, for God's mercies make a man bold to come unto him: His mercies they are of several kinds; every morning, as I have said, God renews his mercies to man, his mercy whereby he prevents wrath when he is angry with us; then his meeting mercy to a repentant sinner, and his forgiving mercy, and his loving mercy, in giving us life, food and raiment, Let us not pry too much into the mercies of God, but let us, as he renews his mercy every day, so let us renew our repentance every day, by faith and a new life every day, and every hour in the day.

Hence we learn, That the first step to Heaven, and the beginning of true repentance, is this, for a man to be grieved for his sins, to be wounded in conscience for them; for, till a man see his sins, and feel the burden of them, and fear the curse of God due unto them, he will never repent, and seek the pardon of them. This is that godly sorrow that leadeth to repentance, never to be left nor repented of.

Doff. 2.
Sorrow
for sin a
note of a
godly man.
2 Cor. 7.
10.
Mat. 26.
Luk. 18.
13.
If

*Vst 1.**Note.**Jam. 2. 9.**Vst 2.*

If this compunction and prick of the heart be the very beginning of true repentance, and the first step to Heaven, and the salvation of a man's own Soul; surely then, most men be in a miserable and wretched estate; for, most men yet have not set forward one foot, or gone one step to Heaven: For they have never been humbled, never touched, never yet wounded, nor pricked in heart for their sins, and therefore must needs be in a dangerous estate. Well then, apply this to your selves; didst thou never in all thy Life find thy heatt pricked for thy sins, did the sacrificing Knife of the Word never wound thy conscience, nor fetch one tear from thine eyes for thy sin? didst thou never find thy heart to mourn, and to be cast down with remorse of conscience? Certainly thy case is fearful and dangerous, thou art not yet gone one step to Heaven, nor moved one finger to eternal Life. No, no, thou art yet in thy sins, in extream danger to be damned. Oh then, let the Word come home to you, harden not your hearts against it, never be at quiet till you can say, I have felt my soul touched and wounded with the Word of God.

This serveth for the comfort of God's children; for if we find and feel our hearts broken and wounded for sin, so as we mourn for them with a godly sorrow, because they be sins, displease God, offend his Majesty, it is a certain sign we have truly repented, we are in the state of grace, God's Spirit hath met with us, the Word hath

hath not been in vain in our hearts, but hath wounded sin, cut the throat of it. Blessed be God, if thou canst say by experience, that the Word hath been powerful to wound thy Soul, so as thy conscience is truly touched, not only because of God's anger, but because of this, that we have sinned against a merciful Father. This godly sorrow ever goes with repentance; not as Cain, Judas, &c. who despaired of God's mercy with a desperate sorrow, because of the punishment; but when we are wounded with sin, to mourn for it, because it offendeth God, a loving Father.

From David's prayer and first petition, mark what it is he so earnestly craveth; not a Kingdom, not gold, not silver, nor the life of his enemy, but mercy, mercy alone; he craveth for nothing but mercy. And therefore in his person we learn, what that is which we should most desire above all things in the World, namely, the favour and mercy of God in Christ Jesus; so that if it should be asked, what we should desire in all the World, we should answer, mercy, and the favour of God in Jesus Christ. He is a blessed man that hath mercy; let other men desire worldly wealth, riches, honour, gold, silver; but, Lord, I crave nothing but mercy, thy favour and loving countenance. The poor Publican coming to God, he knocks on his breast, and cries for mercy; *God be merciful to me a sinner.*

Doct. 3.
The first
thing Da-
vid cra-
veth is
mercy.

Lu. 18. 13.

D

For

For there is nothing in the whole World, that is able to appease the trouble of a wounded conscience, save only the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. *David* no doubt had tossed many thoughts within himself, when he came to utter this which is here mentioned; he had a true sight, no doubt, of the misery and wretched estate wherein he stood, by reason of his sin. And had there been any other way in the World to have gotten out of that estate, he would have found it. But mark, he casts his eye only upon the mercy of God; making that his surest refuge in this his greatest necessity. Even so, howsoever the opinions of men, as touching happiness, be diverse, poor men thinking riches, the prisoner liberty, the sick man health; although these desire all these, yet the sinner never desired mercy. This mercy of God, *David*, this sweet singer of Israel, had oftentimes sinned, now he desires it. And this is the difference betwixt the godly and the wicked, Honour me (saith *Saul*) before my people. Have mercy upon me (saith *David*).)

Us. I.

We learn hence, that nothing can pacifie a wounded conscience, grieved and distressed for sin, but only the mercy and favour of God in Jesus Christ. Men may in all their distresses go to sports and pastime, and merry company. But alas, this is no comfort to a wounded Soul; only the mercy of God, and feeling of his love in Christ, can asswage and pacifie the accusing of our consciences. A man in a hot burning

ing Ague may taste of cold water, which may ease him for the present ; but alas, after it will increase his torment. And as an old sore, if it be not healed at the bottom, though it seem to be sound on the top, yet it will break out again, and become more dangerous and incurable. Even so, when men shall seek to smother the accusation of conscience, to blunt the edge of it, it will after rebound again, and give a deadly wound to desperation.

Dost thou find thy conscience unquiet ? Dost thou feel it wound and accuse thee, so that thou canst find no comfort nor rest unto thy Soul ? There is no other way in the World to pacifie thy conscience, and to have peace, than to intreat and beg for mercy at God's hands. *The Kingdom of God stands not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost.* So that although a wicked man enjoy all the World, yet if he have not mercy, and the pardon of his sins, alas, he shall have no sound peace of conscience, no joy in his Soul, nor any drop of true comfort : And therefore, let us all seek reconciliation with God, intreat for favour and mercy, and never give any rest unto our Souls, till we can feel and find our selves assured of God's mercy in Christ, and the pardon of our sins. If any say, O that I could feel this in my Soul, I have an accusing conscience. I feel it terrifie me, I am afraid I shall be condemned, I can find no comfort, what shall I do ? Even as David here, beg hard, seek

Nothing
can pacifie
a wounded
conscience
but God.
Rom.4.14

earnestly, for so the Lord promiseth : If we stirke, we shall find. And therefore, let us pray, and continue in prayer, and know, that the Lord will, in the end, hear and grant our request.

To whom
he directs
his prayer.

The second point, is, the party to whom the Prophet directs his prayer, and seeketh for comfort; not to any Bald-pate, nor to any Saint or Angel; nor to the Virgin Mary; but he goeth to God, prayeth to him, *Have mercy upon me, O God.* And he directs his prayer to the whole Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; to God the Father, as the Author of all mercy; to Jesus Christ, by whom, and in whose name, we obtain mercy; and to the Holy Ghost, because he doth teach us to pray, and doth convey and derive all saving comfort to us.

Doct. 4.
God alone
is to be
prayed to
Ro. 10. 14.
Dan. 6.
Psal. 2. 7.
Lev. 16.
31.
Ef. 8. 19.
Ef. 56.
Dan. 9. 17.

Hence we learn, to whom we must direct all our prayers, namely, to God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; because we must pray to him alone, in whom we must believe. Secondly, God alone can and will pardon the sins of those that seek unto him for mercy. Thirdly, it is God's Commandement, That we should pray to him, and to no other creature. Fourthly, we have promises, that if we pray unto him, he will hear us. Fifthly, we have the examples of all God's Children, who, in all their troubles sought to God alone, and to no other creature in the World, and so prevailed. How available were the prayers of Abraham, being made unto God in Faith, *Gen. chap. 18.* That if ten righteous persons

sons had been found in Sodom, God had spared those Cities for their sake? How was the Sun and Moon stayed at the prayers of Joshua, till he was reveng'd on his enemies? *Jos. chaps. 10.* How did Elias, by his prayer, obtain rain, which had been withheld from the earth three years and six months?

*1 Reg. 17. Jz. 5. 17. Alt. 32. 1, 2. Job. 5.
14 Dan. 9. 17. Job. 13. 4.*

This condemns the blasphemous Doctrine of the Church of Rome, who teach men to pray unto Saints and Angels, to the Virgin Mary, to stocks and stones, and I know not what; whereas the Lord saith plainly, *He will give his glory to no creature.* Now that we may not pray unto them, it is manifest: First, we have no commandments; secondly, no promise; thirdly, no examples of God's Children; fourthly, we may not believe in them.

Nay, would we not take him to be a foolish Suppliant, that when the King's Son offereth to speak for him to his Father, would refuse to use his Mediation, and go to one of his Servants to intreat for him? Is it not meet that such a one should be said nay? Eyen so, in as much as the Father sendeth us unto his Son, and the Son calleth us unto himself, what madness is it then to run as well from the one as to the other, to go from the Son to the Saints, from him that can help, to them that cannot help, depriving the Father of his honour, the Son of his Office, and disgracing the Saints? Away therefore with the mediation of Saints and

Use 2.

*Esa. 41. 5.
Esa. 63. 10.*

Angels, who know not our hearts, nor hear our prayers. There is one Mediator betwixt God and man, the man Christ Jesus. And, I John 5. 13. This assures have we in him, that asking any thing according to his will, he beareth us. Let us tread in the steps of David and Moses, and the rest of the servants of God, who ever have in their greatest trouble called upon the name of the Lord. And howsoever Papists or Idolaters will be ready to pretend humility, and they will not be so bold to come to God themselves, but they will use the mediation of such as are about him : Yet, let us know that David when he came to God, he was as humble as they, and far beyond them ; yet his humility did no whit hinder his holy boldness, as to come into God's presence. For our humility doth not appear in shrouding our selves under the Saints wings, but by humble and hearty confessing of our sins unto God.

Let us go unto God in prayer, intreat for mercy at his hands. Let us not go to Saints, or Angels; or any other Creature, save God alone, in the name of Christ Jesus : What Father is more ready and willing to hear his child, than the Lord is ready and near at hand to hear them that call upon him in truth ? Now, that we may pray unto God for mercy, and pardon of our sins, we must be perswaded of two things : First, of the power of God, that he is able : Secondly, of his will, that he is willing to pardon them. The poor Leper saith, Lord, if thou wilt,

wilt; thou canst make me clean. And therefore, that we may pray in faith, and assurance, let us be periwaded of these two things: First, that God is Almighty, and is able to pardon all our sins, though never so great. Secondly, that he is most ready and willing, for Christ's sake, (in whose name we come unto him) to pardon our sins: For if we doubt of either of these, we cannot pray in faith, and so shall not obtain that we desire.

Seeing David prayeth for pardon of sin, and traves it only at God's hands; we see, that it is a cursed and blasphemous Doctrine of the Papists, who hold, that their head, the Pope, can pardon sins; yea, not only give a man pardon for his sins past, but (far more) can pardon, and seal him a pardon of his sins many years to come. A most blasphemous Doctrine, and that which opens a gap to all sin, when a man shall have promise of pardon for sins to come. But we see here, that the word of God speaks clear contrary, namely, that God alone can pardon sins: *For who can forgive sins save God only?* And where did we ever find, that God did pardon a man's sins for time to come; but rather threatneth sinners with judgment, to make them beware of sin. So that we see that the Pope is Anti-christ, who setteth himself in the seat of God, and exalts himself above God, in that he takes upon him that God never did; to give a man pardon for his sins, before they be committed.

Vsi. 3.

The Pope
cannot for-
give sins.

Lu. 5. 21.

2 Thes.
21. 4.

After thy loving kindness, &c.

Doctr. 5.
Experi-
ence of
former fa-
vour assu-
reth of fu-
ture fa-
vour.

David being dismayed, and cast down in the sense of his misery, doth look up to God for mercy, and is emboldned thereby to draw nearer unto him, and with some comfort to call upon him for mercy.

Whence we learn, first of all, this Doctrine; that the experience of Almighty God's former favour casteth off fear, and causeth assurance in God, and is one of the chiefest causes to move us still to trust in him, as Ps. 4. *Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness, for thou hast set me at liberty when I was in trouble; have mercy therefore upon me, and hearken to my prayer.* Where the Prophet reasoneth from the time past, to the time to come, and intreateth God to hear him now, because he had already shewed mercy on him. The like we may see, Ps. 22. *Thou didst draw me out of the Womb, &c.* Out of which words we gather, that the Prophet, for benefits past, assures himself of deliverance from dangers present. The like of the Lion, and the Bear, I Sam. 17. 4. Ps. 34. 7.

We learn hence, to acknowledg his great mercy; that maketh one mercy the seal of another, and one grace the pawn of another. Now, what man or woman hath not received thousands and ten thousands of mercies from the God of mercy? All which may be so many comforts unto his soul, to assure him, that God will never forsake him. Indeed,

died, if our olyn works or righteousness, were the only ground to move the Lord to take pity on us, then we should be much dis-couraged in our selves, when we look back unto our Lives: But now the former mercies of God are argumentes of fursher mercies, to assure us that he will add mercy to mercy: Whereby we may see how fruitful the lo-ving kindness of the Lord is, always produc-ing more, as one grain of Sora increaseth an hundred fold,

Again, we learn hence a notable diffe-rence between God and man in bestowing benefits; men are quickly weary of their liberality; but it is not so with God; the more bold we are in asking, the more boun-tiful he is in giving; which is a comfort to all weak Christians, and wounded Souls, who are ever ready to reason thus within them-selves: Will God hear me, or respect me? will he shew his loving kindness toward me a wretched sinner? Yea, God doth hear thee, and respect thee, and will shew mercy unto thee, if thou seek unto him in faith; yea, the often we ask, the better we are accepted of God; the more we desire, the more we obtain: He chargeth us, *Psal. 50. 15.* To call on him in the day of trouble, and assureth us of our deliverance, *Jas. 1. 5, 6.*

Hence mark what is that, whereby poor distressed souls, thrown down for sin, wounded and melting for sin, and almost in the gulph of desperation (as David was) that gives them courage, and emboldens them to come into the presence of God, to stand be-

Use 2.

Doct. 6.
The mercy
of God
emboldens
sinners to
come unto
him.

Pl. 103. 8.

fore their Judg; namely this, the endles
love and mercy of God in Jesus Christ, even
the consideration of God's mercy, that he is
most ready to pardon and forgive poor sin-
ners, to receive them to mercy; for so long
as the conscience accuses for sin, and terri-
fies a poor sinner, he doth nothing but fly
from God, run from him, dares not look
unto him, nor call upon him, till he con-
ceive of God's mercy in Christ, that he is
most willing to pardon those which do truly
repent.

Now, that God is merciful, and ready to
pardon poor sinners, and to receive them to
mercy, it doth appear by that his loving in-
vitation, Matth. chap. 11. v. 28. *Come unto
me all ye that travail, and are heavy laden, and
I will ease you.* Likewise he embraceth the
poor and simple as lovingly and cheerfully,
as the rich and wise of the World. Pub-
licans and sinners are accepted of him, who
were contemned of the Jews. The woman
taken in Adultery, is exhorted by him to
repentance: The blind man restored to his
sight, and cast out of the Synagogue, is
sought out by Christ, and taught to believe,
Job. 9. 3. The penitent Thief is by him
converted to the Faith, *Luke 23.* according
to that *Mat. 18. 14.* *It is not the will of
God that any of these little ones should perish.*
The like we may say of *Mary Magdalene,*
who was infamous in Life, out of whom
Christ cast seven Devils; of the *Canaanitish
woman,* whom he heard and helped; of the
Cripple that lay at the Pool, whom, when
Jesus

Jesus found in the Temple, Job. 5. he exhorted to sin no more, according to that of the Evangelist, Matth. 11. That, by the power and love of Christ the Blind had their sight restored, the Lepers were cleansed, the Dead were raised, the Lame walked, the Sick were healed, and the Poor received the Gospel.

Seeing a poor sinner will never fly to God for mercy, until he be perswaded of the favour and mercy of God in Christ, and can perswade himself that God is most mercifull and willing to pardon him ; We must remember, ever with the one eye, to look unto his Justice, that he is a holy and just God, most righteous, and one that cannot bear with sin and sinners, that live and delight in sin : So with the other eye, we must look unto his endless mercy in Christ Jesus. Fix our eyes upon that, and rely on that ; otherwise alas, we should be so far from seeking unto him, that we shall most willingly fly from his presence, as a terrible and angry God, and most righteous Judg. And therefore, as we must needs behold him as a just God, and righteous to punish sin, so we must labour to be perswaded of his mercy that he is most ready to pardon, full of compassion, that so by Jesus Christ we may have access unto the Throne of Grace, and enter with boldnes into his presence. And because that Christ Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and Life, let us never go without him in the arms of our faith, and in his Name beg for mercy ; for without him we can find no mercy, but judgment. We

Eph. 2. 11.
1. John. 2. 1.

use 2.
Cause of
man's de-
spair.

We see hence the very cause why many come to despair, and so to cast away their own souls; namely, cause they cannot conceive that God hath any mercy for them: They cannot be persuaded of God's endless mercy in Christ Jesus; but when their consciences do accuse them of their sins, they presently see that God is angry with them, that he is a righteous Judge, an angry and terrible God against sinners: And thus, seeing his justice and anger against sin, they dare not appear in his presence, but fly from him, as *Adam* did in the garden, and could wish that they might never come into his presence: They cannot for their lives behold the mercy of God in Christ. Impenitent sinners cannot call God Father, they cannot endure God's angry countenance, but rather wish they were out of the World, and might never come before his face: For this is certain, that, unless a poor sinner, and distressed soul, can together with the sense of sin, and God's anger against sin, behold, and acknowledg the endless mercy of God to pardon them, he never will dare to appear in his presence, but God's anger will overwhelm him. Well then, let us, with *David*, so behold and feel the anger of God for our sins, to humble us, that we never despair of God's mercy, but still know and believe, that God is no less infinitely merciful, if we can repent, to pardon and forgive us, than he is infinitely just to punish, if we will not repent.

Mark how David, a man after God's own heart, intreats the Lord to pardon his sins for his mercies sake : Therefrom we learn, That there is no other cause to move the Lord to pity and pardon us our sins, but only his most free and undeserved mercy : There is no worth, nor goodness, or virtue in any man, to move the Lord to pity, and pardon us, but all this is of his meer bounty, goodness, and mercy, without all merits of ours. As, what could the Lord see in *Saul*, in *Rahab*, in *Mary Magdalene*, out of whom were cast seven Devils, to move him to mercy ; but his tender mercy alone ? Even so, all the gifts and graces of God's Spirit, bestowed upon his servants, either concerning this Life, or that which is to come : They all proceed from the free grace and mercy of God in Jesus Christ, according to that of the Apostle, Rom. 6. 23. *Eternal life is the free gift of God.* This is confirmed by the practice of Godly Daniel, Dan. 9. 8, 9. *O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us shame; because we have sinned against thee.* Whereby we gather, that though our prayers be not without effect, yet they prevail not with God by virtue of any excellency that is in them, but because God hath promised to be sound of them that seek him in the means he hath appointed. And so for the rest of God's Ordinances, Word, Sacraments, &c. the Lord doth accept them, and is well pleased in them ; howbeit, not through our worthiness that perform them, but for his goodness sake doth

Doct. 7.
God's mercy,
man's
merit.

Act. 6.
Luk. 7.

doth command them. For these properties are to be found in works that are meritorious:

First, they must be done by a man's own self, and from himself; but we have nothing of our own to give unto God: *For what hast thou, that thou hast not received?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. without him we can do nothing: It is he that must work in us the will and the deed.

Secondly, they must be such works as are not due unto him, they must not be due debt, but proceed from our own free will, even such as God cannot justly challenge at our hands. But whatsoever we do, we do it of debt and duty; yea, Luk. 17. 10. *When we have done all things that are commanded us, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.*

Thirdly, the works we do must be done for the profit of him from whom we look for a reward. But, Psal. 16. *All our godliness cannot reach unto the Lord.* We may benefit man, but we cannot benefit our Maker; therefore it is plain, we cannot merit,

Fourthly, the work and the reward must be in proportion equal, for if the reward be more than the work, it is not a reward of desert, but a gift of good will. But, Rom. 8. *The afflictions of this present time are not worthy of the glory that shall be shewed unto us.* So then, they are not deserved of us, but are bestowed on us.

This condemns the Doctrine of the Church of Rome, who teach, that God doth shew

shew mercy on some men, because they be worthy of it for their good works, and honest life ; and therefore, they can dispose themselves by virtue of their free will, to move the Lord to have mercy upon them. But we ascribe all to grace, and meer mercy ; and therefore, seeing pardon of sins comes from the meer mercy and love of God in Christ, we must ascribe all the praise of it to God alone : Pardon of sins, grace to repent, life eternal ; all these come from the meer mercy and love of God in Christ Jesus. And therefore, let us ascribe nothing to our own goodness, or virtue, to our own wit, or reason ; but give all the glory and praise to God alone.

Eph. 1. 8.

*According unto the multitude of thy compassions
put away mine iniquities.*

AS if David should have said, Oh, Lord, my sins are many and great, and therefore I stand in need of thy mercy for my misery, and of the multitude of thy compassions, for pardon of all my offences.

When as David prayeth for the multitude of mercies, for the pardon of his sins ; We learn hence, what an hainous and horrible thing sin is in God's sight, that it cannot be pardoned without a multitude of mercies : Sin being committed against an infinite God, deserves infinite and endless punishment of soul and body ; and before it can be pardoned, must have infinite mercy.

Sin

Dall. 8.
The na-
ture of sin.

Sin is odious in it self, and maketh us vile and abominable in the sight of God, *Jer. 5. 25. 41. 59. 1. 23.* Keeping all good things from us, and pulling down all evil upon us ; and that the wages thereof is death, being able to press us down even to the bottom of Hell. It is sin that makes us execrable to the Lord, and abominable in his sight ; yea, nothing doth more deform us, and make us cursed and detestable in the sight of God, than sin ; the pardon whereof must have infinite mercy.

Then hence we learn, that we never esteem rightly of sin, till we come to be so grieved for it, as that we find our selves to stand in great need of God's mercy for the pardon of it ; yea, of a multitude of mercies, of a Sea of mercies ; till we find, that we stand in need of every drop of Christ's blood, to save our souls. David having sinned, begs for a multitude of mercies ; and so we shall find, that if we truly repent of sin, that we stand in need of a Sea of mercy, and of every drop of Christ's blood.

Use 2.

This condemneth most men and women, who are so far from esteeming thus of sin, that they make no bones of great sins, and many grievous impieties ; yea, they make a sport of sin, swearing, lying, drunkenness, whoredom, pride, covetousness, &c. and give them names of virtue. We see it is too too common, that men think they stand in no need of God's mercy, they think, the Lord bave mercy upon me will serve. But if we will judg of sin as we ought, we shall find, that we stand

Stand in need of a Sea of mercy, in regard of the multitude of our sins.

We see that the Lord is full of mercy, full of pity and compassion, and his mercies are over all his works. And indeed, his mercies are great: First, because they come from an infinite God, to men who are infinitely evil and deserve no mercy but judgment. Secondly, because, for time, they last for ever, and never have end. Thirdly, because the mercy of God concerns Salvation, Life eternal, &c.

God a
God of
mercy.
Ps. 11.9.

And this is that which the Lord himself proclaimeth from Heaven, Exod. 34. 6. *The Lord is strong, merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness, and truth; reserving mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.* Again, Mich. 7. 18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that taketh away iniquity, and passeth by transgression?* He retains not wrath for ever, because mercy pleaseth him; he will turn again and have compassion upon us, he will subdue all our iniquities, and cast all our sins into the bottom of the Sea. If. 55.9. Ez. 33.11. Though our sins be great, yet great is the mercy of God in pardoning. Rom. 5. 20. *Where sin doth abound, there grace doth superabound.* Wherefore, let no sin so dismay us, as to cast us down to despair: let this cheer us that God is gracious.

Seeing the Lord's mercy is a bottomless Sea, that cannot be drawn dry, His compassions fail not. Hence is matter of great comfort to all true penitent sinners: For thy sins cannot be so many, and so great, but if thou

Use I.

Lam. 3.

thou hast grace to repent, God is able and willing to pardon them all.

If thou say, Oh my sins are great, grievous, monstrous, unspeakable : Well, the mercy of God is greater, as may appear in the pardon of *Lot's* sins, *David's*, *Peter's*, *Paul's*, *Rahab's*, &c. if thou canst repent, and truly turn to God. If thou say, Oh ! they are more than the stars in number, remember that God's mercy is a bottomless Sea ; he hath a multitude of compassions, and can pardon them, though never so great and grievous. If thou say, Oh ! I have lived a long time in them, twenty, thirty, forty years ; look on God's mercy shewed to *Mary Magdalene*, *Paul*, and others, that had lived long in sin ; so that if a man have grace to repent, neither the greatness, nor the multitude, nor the continuance of his sins, none of all these can hinder God's mercy ; but here is all, that men must repent ; otherwise, if men do not repeat, the least sin is damnable ; and if men do repeat, no sin is so great, but it is pardonable.

Yet, notwithstanding, men must take heed, that they take not occasion to live in sin, because God is merciful ; and these things are noted as a comfort for those that sigh and groan under the burthen of their sins, to comfort them and to keep them from despair, that if they be truly humbled for their sins, there is yet with the Lord mercy in store whereby they may be saved.

Seeing all God's gifts come from him to us of grace and mercy, even because he is full

The mercies of God belong not to all.

VII. I.

full of mercy, and hath given a multitude of mercies for poor penitent sinners that sue to him for mercy; We learn, above all things in the World, to desire mercy, and the pardon of our sins. This we see in the Prophet *David*, *My soul is sore troubled, but, Lord, how long wilt thou delay? Return, O Lord, deliver my soul, save me for thy mercies sake.* This is also practised by the Church: *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.* Thus the godly, when they desire any blessing, they crave it of favour: If they crave to have any judgment removed, they crave it of mercy, esteeming his mercy above all the World, or ought else they can desire: Therefore, above all things in the World, for the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, use all good means to obtain it; employ thy self diligently to keep it, and to continue it towards thee, that in thy Life it may be well with thee, and in Death it may not depart from thee.

Lastly, where the Prophet *David* saith, *according to the multitude of thy compassions, blot out mine offences:* Mark that, the word (*blot out*) is a Metaphor taken from writing-Tables, when a man shall wipe out with a Spunge all that is Written; or, from crossing of Books of Record, Books of Debts, &c.

And it is all one, as if *David* should have said, *O Lord, I have run very far upon thy score, I have even filled thy Book, not with small, but great sums of debt; pay I am not able, no, not one farthing.* Now, Lord, I be-

Ps. 6. 6.
Ps. 63. 3.

Lam. 3.

Doſt. 10.
The Lord
keeps a
Book of
our sins.

*Rev. 20.
12.*

befeech thee, therefore, deface, crois, and blot out altogether the debt of my sins.

Hence we learn, That all our sins are recorded in the Lord's Books: He keeps a Bill of account, all our very thoughts, words, and deeds, are known unto him; he keeps them in mind, and memory, and hath them written down: And, unless we repent of them and they be blotted out with the blood of Christ, laid hold on by faith, the Lord will call them all to account at the day of Judgment: *The Books shall then be opened, and every sin, old, new, secret, open, against God and man, shall be brought to light, for they be recorded in God's Book.*

Now by these books we may not understand material Books, in which men write down such things as they would have remembered, for God cannot be said to stand in need of any such helps; but because all things are as certain and manifest unto him, as if he had his Register in Heaven to keep account thereof, *Pſal. 139. 16. Dan. 7. 18. Phil. 4. 3.*

So then we may see, that the Lord doth keep a note of all our sins, and chalk them as it were upon a score, until payment come. It is not with God as it is with Princes, who are ignorant of Treasons plotted against them, but all things, both past, present, and to come, are known to him, as well our rebellious thoughts, as sinful acts committed. And although we do forget, and carelessly mind what we have done, yet God forgets nothing, every part and parcel of our debt being noted exactly in his Book of remembrance.

Sec-

Seeing all our sins be known to God, he notes them down in his Book of account, and not one sin can pass him, but he writes it down : How should this make us all careful as to our lives, that we commit no sin ? For if we do, the Lord knows it, and notes it in his Book, and unless he blot them out, they shall all come to account.

A wicked man, and an unchaste woman, how many thousand vile and filthy thoughts have they in their minds night and day ? Their hearts burn in lust and uncleanness, and these they pass over, regarding them not, making little or no account of them ; but alas, the Lord hath them all written in the Book of his remembrance ; and if thou repent not of them, and leave them, Oh woe to thy soul, when this Book comes to be opened, and read over, and when thou shalt receive according to thy works. Job saith, Thou hast sealed up our sins in a bag. To seal up a thing, doth note an exact kind of keeping it. So then, the bag and bundle of our sins being sealed up, and that by God himself, let us not imagine, that any one can drop out, but all shall come to judgment.

Use 2.

Seeing all our sins are as so many debts, set down in God's Book, and we must come to a reckoning one day ; how should we labour all the days of our life to have them blotted out, to have this Book cancelled and crossed even by the fingers of God ? For, indeed we may run on still in God's debt, and set on a pace upon his score ; but we cannot so fast wipe them out again : Nay, we can-

How to
have the
Bookscan-
celled.

never of our selves pay one farthing, or satisfye the least of our debts we owe unto him. It is God that hath written down, that must freely forgive and cancel, as himself telleth us, *1Sa. 43. 25. I, even I am he, saith the Lord, that putteth away thine iniquities.* Now, that they may be blotted out, and this Book may be cancelled, we must,

First, truly repent of them all, bewail them, be grieved for them; that by them we have grieved God.

Secondly, we must beg hard, even as for life and death, for pardon of them, as David did here; again, and again ask mercy. If a man should run into debt a thousand pounds, and know not how to pay his Creditor, his best way were to seek and make friends unto him for to forgive it. We are debtors to God, thousand thousand sins; pay we cannot, then let us confess the debt, intreat him to blot his book, and take that hand-writing, and bond of obligation against us, and nail it to Christ's cross. And this is an excellent property of the child of God, that he desirereth (after a sort) to come out of God's debt. A true child of God cannot abide to have any thing standing on God's score, for he knows, *Heb. 10. 31. That it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God:* So long to defer, till God warn to his Bar. Oh then, seek betimes, and give the Lord no rest till the debt be pardoned.

Thirdly, that our sins may be clean blotted out, we must have faith in Christ Jesus, for nothing can blot out sins, but his blood alone;

lone ; nothing in Heaven and Earth can satisfy God's anger, wash away sin, blot out our offences, but only the blood of Jesus Christ. And therefore let us labour continually, to be assured of it by faith, to sprinkle our sinful hearts with the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

I Joh. 1. 7.
Rev. 1. 6.

Seeing the Prophet *David* doth acknowledge, that this debt was more than he was able to pay, and therefore disclaiming his own sufficiency, appeals only to God's mercy in Christ, for the pardon of the same. We learn, the Doctrine of Merits, yea, and Supererogation, now taught in the Church of Rome, is most false, and erroneous, teaching poor people to lean unto Man's satisfactions, which they must make unto God, either here or in Purgatory : Whereas, the Justice of God is infinite ; and when we have done all we can here in this life, we are unprofitable servants. Nay, there is not that man in the whole World, that if God should lay aside his mercy, and deal in justice, were able to satisfy the wrath of God for the least debt that he doth owe unto God. And unless the Lord take pity on us, and forgive the debt, there remaineth nothing for us, but to lye in prison, Mat. 28. 27. and that for ever. *David's* eyes did gush out with tears, when he did see other men sin ; and surely, my beloved, his eyes did shed a fountain of tears, when he had committed that act of folly with Bathsheba, he little thought or feared that he had committed adultery : This act of his was his boldness, and security at that time.

When

When we lye on our sick beds, our conscience shall witness against us; nay, our pillows will testify, that they are stuffed full of Bonds and Bills, our bolsters with Forfeitures and Morgages, our beds full of baggs of Gold, gotten by extortion and usury; our curtains hang about us with nothing but Indentures and Adventures. And do we think, that a sum of money given to the poor, or to some charitable uses, when we die, will serve the turn to take away or lessen our sins; or that a few mourning Gowns left in the Will, to be given to the needy, will hide these black deeds, or make our spotted and sinful souls white? No, it will not. If we would have our sins remitted, and go to Heaven, we must, First confess our faults: Secondly, repent us of our sins; and then, Thirdly, give satisfaction for the wrong we have done to those parties which we have injured: This is the way to go to heaven, and best pleasing to God.

Take this example of *David*, when he was told by *Nathan*, of a certain rich man which had taken away a poor man's Lamb which was all he had; and such a Lamb as he nourished in his own bosom, and brought up at his own Table: *David* hearing this said, *The man that bath done this shall surely restore four-fold*. This was *David's* will, restoration to be made to the party wronged. The like of *Zacheus*; Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wrong'd any man, I will restore four-fold.

So it must be with that man, if ever he means to enjoy Heaven : First, to make his peace with GOD, then after be reconciled to his Brother ; not in bare words only, but in real actions : And so by this means you will hide and cover a multitude of sins. Strive thus with thy self, and thou shalt thereby gain thee a quiet Conscience, both towards thy God, and also towards man.

P S A L M L I . Vers. 2.

Wash me throughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sins.

IN this Verse, the Prophet David proceeds with his former petition unto God for grace and favour, for pardon of his sins; yet so, as he doth it more effectually and more earnestly, because his soul was now exceedingly grieved, seeing his woful misery that he was in, how foul and filthy he was, stained with sin most hainously. And though some put a difference between these two speeches, and understand the former of the washing of Justification, and pardon of sins, not imputing them unto his charge : And the second of the washing of Sanctification, and the curing of our sins; yea, by little and little washing and purging them away, and more and more renewing of us in soul and body, by the work of Sanctification: Yet, many think the words do both imply one thing, namely, to be thoroughly purged from the

filth and stain of Original and natural sin, and to be received again into the favour of God, by the means of Christ.

It may seem strange what should move David to confess his sin, and to intreat for pardon in this manner. There was no Court of Inquisition concerning this fact; there was no Magistrate to examine him, nor Judge to condemn him, he being a King: Nay, no doubt the Devil might set some on work, which might back him, and seem to lessen his fault. What then should cause David, without any regard of his credit, to come forth in this manner, and thus publickly to confess his pollution, and to be so earnest unto God, with his *have mercy, blot out, wash me, &c.*? Surely it was his own conscience; and that extorted and wrung from him this confession, and made him so earnest unto God in prayer, saying, *O Lord, take from me thy scourge and plague.*

From this prayer of David, repeating his request to God so often: *Have mercy, blot out, wash me, &c.* We learn, that a wounded conscience, that is truly touched for sin, can find no rest or comfort, but only in the feeling of God's mercy in Christ for the pardon of sin. And therefore David, to shew how he was truly humbled and wounded for sin, he never can content himself to pray and beg for mercy and pardon. For after a man sees his sins, and the filthiness of them, and beholds the wrath of God against sin, his conscience still accuseth him, neither can he find any rest, till he do feel the mercy of God in Christ.

Doct. I.
A wounded
consci-
ence can
find no
rest, but
only in
Christ.

Christ for the pardon of them. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* Again, *The Kingdom of God stands not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost :* That is, in the pardon of sins, and feeling of God's love; for sin once known will never cease to accuse, until it be pardoned.

Rom. 14.

17.

Rom. 3.1.

And this is confirmed unto us by the example of Cain, Gen. 4. who having slain his own brother, and shed innocent blood, which cried in the ears of the Lord for vengeance: How did the Lord strike him with an accusing conscience, that he feared the sight of every creature, when he had once attained the sight of his sin? And whereas he thought to build him a City, to yield him comfort and safety; even there did the justice of God overtake him, and he was driven from his enterprise. The like we may see in Belshazzar, Dan. 5. 6. when there appeared fingers of a mans hand upon the wall, his thoughts were troubled, and his knees smote one against the other. According to that punishment the Lord foretold; Levit. 26. I will send even a faintness into their hearts; and the sound of a leaf shaken shall chase them: and they shall fly as from a sword, though none pursue them. So that if it were possible to escape all apprehension, and accusation in the world; yet, a man's own conscience would arrest, and condemn him, even hale him unto judgment.

Seeing this is the nature of sin, that being known it will never cease to accuse, and vex

the conscience of a poor sinner, till it be pardoned; it should provoke us all that feel the smart of sin, never to give the Lord any rest, untill we have pardon granted: But, as David did here, pray again and again for mercy and favour, and reconciliation with God, and never leave the Lord till we obtain mercy and favour, and till we have got some comfortable perswasion of God's love in Christ for the pardon of our sins; for till we do so we shall never have peace, nor quietness of conscience; we shall never have found comfort and joy in God's Spirit, but ever anguish, and dolour, sorrow, and heaviness; yea, either we shal grow blockish, and senseleis, or else in the end come to extream desperation. And therefore let us labour with the Lord, ply him with prayers and tears for pardon, and never let him have rest, till we get one drop of mercy for the pardon of our sins.

Use 2.

Here we are admonished not to flatter our selves in our sins, as though no body saw us; as it is the manner of wicked men to say, Eccl. 23. *Who seeth me? I am compassed about with darkness, the walls bide me, no body seeth me, whom need I fear?* And indeed, there is scarce one of a thousand that makes any conscience of sin, so that the world do not take notice of it to condemn him. But let us not deceive our selves; though we think our selves never so secret, committing Adultery under a Canopy, or in the dark, yet our own Consciences will reply; I see thee, and I will accuse thee: And then, what is man the better for having

having no body private to his sins, when he hath a conscience within him, which dogs him up and down in every corner, giving him no rest?

This shews the madness of carnal men, when they feel the burthen of sin pressing them, and their consciences accusing them. What, do they run to God, and seek him? No, no, they run to their sports and pastimes, to Cards, and Tables, to the Tavern and Ale-house, and merry company, and thus they think to put off the sense of sin, and to smother and stop the mouth of their accusing consciences.

Mark the thing which thus grieved David's spirit, and vexed his mind; namely, his sins and impieties, his filthy sins, whereby he had grieved his good God, and loving Father. He did not so much fear punishment, as this, to offend his merciful and gracious God. Therefore let us, with David, look back upon our Idolatry, look back upon our Whoredome, and Drunkenness, and then we shall jump with God, and say, that we have had no hard measure, when we are punish'd by any affliction whatsoever shall happen in this Life. If the Lord had not sent Nathan to David, to tell him how he had sinned, what would have been become of him? For David was in security, and, as it were, dead in sins and trespasses; but it was God's great mercy in calling him back. Punishment and affliction cannot come of it self; it was David's sin which caused three-score and ten thousand to dye of the Plague. Can a

Use 3.

Dott. 2.
Difference
between
the sorrow
of the god-
ly and the
wicked.

Rom. 7. 1 C.

stone fly in the air, without the hand that flings it ? Or, can a stone be removed without help ? No more can sin be removed, or our conscience quieted, without our confession and repentance. Repentance must first be inward, and from the heart, in sorrowing, weeping, and lamenting for what hath been done amiss in thought, word, and deed ; and labour to sin no more. Repentance is better for the conscience of man, than cloaths be for his back ; for repentance brings forgiveness of our sins, which otherwise would confound us ; it brings us comfort to our consciences, which otherwise would be affited ; and shall in the end partake of that joy which is unspeakable. Saint Paul said, and confessed, it was not he, but it was sin that reigned in his mortal body, which kept him from repentance, and from the knowldg of Christ, so long as it did. And though sin dwell in us by nature, let us desire and pray to the Lord, that sin may not destroy us for our natural corruption : For as the soul is placed in the body, so is grace in the soul of every true repentant ; and though we have mountains of sins, ready to destroy us ; yet, let them not make us despair, or hinder us from calling upon the Lord for mercy, whose mercy is over all his works. True it is, that the abundance of our sins, and the clog of our own corrupt affections, leads us out of the way which guides us to happiness. And though our misdeeds be works of darkness, yet there is the window of God's grace to give us light, and insight of our sins, which we

we have committed. Therefore, O Lord, suffer *Grace* to dwell and inhabit in our bodies, while we live here in this life, that hereafter we may live with thee in glory forever.

Hence then, mark the difference of God's children, and the wicked, in repentance; the Child of God is sorry for sin, because it is sin, because it offends God, and displeaseth him, and not so much properly for the punishment; (yea, though there were none) yet he would fear to offend, and be grieved for sin, because it is sin, and it breaks God's commandements. This we may behold in *David*, when he had committed those great sins of adultery and murder, and was reproved for them by *Nathan* the Lord's Propheter, 2 Sam. 12. 13. He confesseth with grief and anguish of heart, in this Psalm, ver. 4. *I have sinned against thee, even against thee.* All the judgments which *Nathan* threatened against him from the Lord, did not so much wound him as this, that he had dishonour'd his God. And when he had numbered his people, 2 Sam. 24. 10. his heart smote him, and he cried out, *I have sinned exceedingly in that I have done.* The Pestilence did not so much trouble him, as his pride against God. And the Apostle *Peter*, Mat. 26. 75. seeing how grievously he had sinned, in denying his Master, *went out and wept bitterly.* If there had been neither Heaven nor Hell, neither reward nor punishment, yet this unthankfulness of his towards so kind a Master, would have caused *Peter* to have sorrowed so much as he

did. And when this godly sorrow is once wrought in man's heart, then he beginneth to repent, and never before; the like we may behold in Abraham, in Job, in Joseph, &c. Gen. 18. 30. Gen. 39. 9.

Exod. 10.
11.

1 Sam. 15.

Mar. 27. 3.

Act. 8. 25.

Use.

Only godly sorrow causes true repen-
tance.

But wicked men, they are grieved for sin, not because it is sin, and the breach of God's Law; but for fear of punishment. Pharaoh intreated Moses to pray for him, that the judgment might be removed; but still he loved his sin. So Saul prayed Samuel to pray for him, and to honour him; but still he would go on in his sin. So Judas repented and sorrowed for his sin, because he saw now he should be condemned; and so for punishment he was grieved. Simon Magus prays Peter to pray for him, but how? *That none of the judgments threatened might fall upon him.*

Cain mourned exceedingly, and cried out, saying, Gen. 4. *My sin is greater than can be forgiven me:* But it was not for his hypocrisy in God's service, nor for the cruel murthering of his own Brother, nor the shedding of innocent blood; but because of the punishment that God had inflicted upon him. Ahab also humbled himself, and put on sack-cloath, as though he had been very penitent: But Elias wrung it out from him, denouncing God's judgments against him 2 King 21. 27.

Seeing this is the difference between the godly sorrow of the faithful, and the worldly sorrow of the wicked; one sorrows for sin, because it is sin; the other because of the

the punishment only : Let us hereby prove our sorrow. Art thou grieved for sin, because it is sin, because it offends God ? And art thou more grieved for sin, because it grieves a merciful God, than for fear of punishment ? Yea, wouldst thou be grieved for sin, though there were no Hell, nor Devil to torment thee ; only for this very reason, because it offends thy merciful God ? Then it is a certain token of thy true repentance, and godly sorrow. But if thou find thy heart only to be lumpish, and heavy, in regard of the punishment of sin, in regard of Hell and damnation, and if it were not for that, thou couldst be content to live and go on in sin ; surely then it is but a carnal sorrow, it is not a godly sorrow, that is, only for fear of punishment. And this deceives many a man, who thinks he repents, because he is grieved for sin, in regard of the punishment. But the vilest Atheist, and reprobate in the world may be grieved for sin, in regard of his punishment, as hell fire, and condemnation ; as *Judas* and *Cain* was. *David* did not with *Cain* say, his sins they were greater than could be forgiven : Nor let any sinner whatsoever, when he hath offended God in a high nature, by aggravating his sin, despair with *Judas* to be both his own judg and executioner as he was. O let us never sink under the weight of despair, but confess our sins, and crave pardon for them at the hands of his Majesty with tears and groans : For the child of God is grieved for sin, because it is sin, and offends God, though there were no hell to punish.

Dest. 3.
Sin defiles
a man.

Sin defiles
the whole
man.

Levit. 13:

Yea, the
creature.

David prayeth, that the Lord would wash him; therefore sin defiles, and he was made foul and filthy by his sin: And to wash him much, and to rinse and bathe him, to shew that sin had exceedingly defiled him, and stained him both in soul and body, and made him loathsome; and therefore he desireth to be washed, and cleansed, and purged from the pollution of his sin. *David* knew God was able to forgive him his sin; he did know, that God was not like old *Isaac*, which had but one blessing left, and no more; no, he knew, he had store of blessings and mercies for a relenting soul. One deep calleth upon another, saith *David*, the depth of my sins for the depth of God's mercies.

Hence we may learn, what a vile, filthy, and miserable thing sin is in the sight of God; it stains a man's body, it stains a man's soul, it makes him more vile than the vilest creature that lives; no Toad is so vile and loathsome in the sight of man, as a sinner stained and defiled with sin is in the sight of God, till he be cleansed and washed from them in the blood of Christ. The Leprosie was a wonderful disease; it did infect the body, yea, the cloaths on a man's back; the walls of the house, and the very stones. But this Leprosie of sin doth more defile a man; it defiles the soul and conscience; yea, even the very heavens and earth are stained with the contagion thereof, and are made (by reason of sin) subject to vanity and corruption, *Rom. 8. 20.* Oh then, see how vile a thing sin is in the sight of God, that the infection there-

thereof should seize upon the creature, and make them that they dare not endure and abide the glorious presence of God their Creator.

Seeing sin is so vile a thing, so filthy and unclean, so pollugeth the soul and body, and makes us loathsome in the sight of God, so as no Carrion or Dunghill sends forth a filthier scent of stench than sin : O how should we loath and abhor, quake and tremble at the committing of it ? Oh, it is a wonder to see how wary men are to shun the Plague ; they will not come near the place and person infected, but keep aloof off. Oh, that we could be as wise and careful to shun this plague of all plagues, sin ; that is the plague of soul and body.

But alas, poor blind souls, they, who are most afraid of the bodily plague and infection, fear not this woful plague of sin, make no bones of horrible and grievous sins, of adultery, drunkenness, lying, stealing, &c. yea, as *Solomon* saith, foolish men, and poor ignorant souls, do make a sport of sin, and put on them the name of Virtue : swearing, is a sign of a brave gentleman-like mind ; Drunkenness, good fellowship ; covetousnes, good husbandry ; fornication, a trick of youth ; pride, cleanliness : This is it which maketh our Land to mourn. These men be clean contrary to *David* ; he thought nothing more vile, filthy, and unclean, than sin ; they judge nothing more sweet, and pleasant than sin. But if we could see the loathsome filthiness of sin, how odious it is

Use 2.

Wicked
men add
sin unto
sin, and
pay one
debt with
another.

We be wary to avoid temporal danger.

Dott. 4.
Hard matter to be
cleansed from the
pollution of sin.

in the sight of God, how it stains and defiles both soul and body, then we should hate it, and loath it more than a Toad or Serpent, and shun it above all things in the world : But alas, men sin, and yet see not that they do sin ; they see and feel no danger, they are secure : No man saith, *Alas, what have I done ?*

If any man should say to any of us, Touch not that Garment, it is infected ; or, Taste not that Drink, it is poysoned : How ready would we be to shun it, and avoid it ? We would not touch nor come near it. But yet, though we tell men of sin, bid them take heed of it, it will infect soul and body, and unless men do presently repent, it will bring both to Hell : Yet men, even mad-men, desperately rush into it, wilfully casting away their own souls.

Further, whereas David prays to be washed, *yeaxo* to be washed throughly, or much, and often : And more than that, to be cleansed and rinsed from his sins ; for a deluge of sin must needs have a deluge of punishment ; and therefore, David desired to be washed and cleansed in the blood of Christ, by a lively faith, and a repentant heart. David, he desireth that God would wash, and purge him from his sin : And if David, shall not we desire to be washed and purged, who are, and have been greater sinners than ever David was ? We learnt hence, that it is not so easie a matter for a man to repent, and to get the pardon of his sins, to be washed and cleansed from them, as most men think it is. David desireth the Lord to wash, yea, to wash him often,

often, again, and again, and to bathe and rinse him from his sins; shewing that it is a hard thing to have the spots of sin to be washed out, a hard thing to obtain the pardon of our sins, to be cleansed from the stains and blemishes of them: It will cost much sorrow, many a tear, many a sigh and groan even a great measure of grief; for, look how grievously we have sinned, so greatly should we bewail our sins. And hence it is, that the Lord calling the people to sorrow for their sins, doth not require a light sorrow, or some small measure of grief, but such a sorrow as should even rent their very hearts, *Joel 2. 13.* And the Prophet David saith, in the seventeenth Verse of this Psalm, that a man's heart must be contrite and broken, even as it were rent asunder with godly sorrow, or else his repentance will never be accepted with God. David saith, *Psal. 6. 6.* That he watered his couch with tears. Again, he saith, *Psal. 42.* His tears were his meat day and night. And indeed, it must not be a small measure of sorrow, that we must shew for our sins. For if we had an hundred eyes, and should weep them all out; and if we had a thousand hearts, and they should all break asunder with remorse, and sorrow; all were too little: Yea, although we should even shed tears of blood for our sins, or, with Jeremy, have our heads full of water.

This condemneth the common opinion of men and women; they do think it is the easiest thing in the world to repent, to get the

Vis. I.
Folly of
natural
men de-
scribed.

par-

pardon of their sins ; they do think, that *Lord have mercy upon me* will serve : Oh ! God is merciful, God is merciful ; and so make God's mercy a pack-horse of all their filthy sins. But let no man deceive himself, it is another manner of thing to repent than we take it for ; it will cost thee many a tear, and many a prayer, before thou canst have a Pardon ; it will cost thee many a sob, and sigh, and many an oh, oh, ere thou canst be truly assured of the pardon of them.

How do men deceive their own souls ? thinking every little glimpse of their sins sufficient : No, no, every sorrow brings not with it repentance. *Ahab had sorrow, 1 King. 11. He rent his cloaths, and put on sack-cloath, and fasted.* But this sorrow was as the morning dew, it did quickly consume away. The like may be said of *Felix, Act 24,* and King *Agrippa,* who at the words of *Paul,* could almost become a *Christian* ; of *Herod,* of *Pharaoth,* and the like ; all which have had in them a kind of sorrow ; but it was but carnal, the end whereof is death. It must then be a godly sorrow ; arising from the sight of our sins, that we have offended a good and gracious God, and loving Father in Jesus Christ : And this must even wound our very souls, as the people of the *Jews, Act. 2. 37.* that we know not which way to turn us for comfort.

Let us imitate *David,* let us cry again and again unto the Lord for mercy, let us beg hard for the pardon of our sins, it is the greatest mercy in the world. Good things are not

*Vse 2.
Psal. 32. I.
Pardon of
sin the
greatest
mercy.*

not easily gotten ; Heaven, Life eternal are hard to come by, and therefore let us not imagine, that it is so easie a matter to get the pardon of our sins : No, no, we must fill heaven and earth with cryings and prayers, even as a poor Thief condemned at the Bar, he will cry with tears for mercy. And as a poor Beggar, unlappeth his leggs, sheweth his wounds, and all to move them that pass by to pity him : So we must cry, as for life and death, for the pardon of our sins, lay open our sores and griefs unto the Lord, and give him no rest until we have mercy.

Lastly, it may be demanded what washing David speaks of here : He speaks not here of the legal washing which was used in the time of the Law ; but he speaks here of that washing which is performed only by the blood of Jesus Christ, being laid hold on by Faith : For no water whatsoever can wash away the least spot of sin, but only the blood of Jesus Christ.

So then we learn hence, that there is nothing in heaven or earth, that can purge us from sin, and from the uncleanness of the soul, but only the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, being applied unto us by the hand of Faith : He alone is our Saviour, saving perfectly all that are saved, Heb. 7. He is able to save perfectly all that come unto him ; Heb. 1. 3. And by him he hath purged our sins. So that we are to acknowledge him to be our only and alone Saviour without partner, according to that, Act. 2. There is no other name under heaven given to save us, but the name of Christ.

This

Joh. 1. 29.
1 Joh. 1. 7.
Rev. 1. 6.
Zac. 13. 1.

Doct. 5.
Blood of
Christ a-
lone doth
wash away
sin.

1 Joh. 1. 5.
Heb. 9. 9.

Act. 15. 9.
2 Cor. 6.
11.

This sheweth the weakness of the Church of Rome, who bear men in hand, that their holy water, as they call it, and conjured stuff, is able to wash away sin : No, no, it cannot do it ; only the blood of Christ can do it, and no other creature in heaven or earth. And therefore, howsoever in word they honour Christ, yet in deed they deny him, in joyning to the al-sufficient satisfaction of Christ, other satisfaction : As their Sacrifice in the Mass, to help Christ's sacrifice on the Cross ; and the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Saints and Angels, &c. to this merititious intercession, robbing God of his honour, and Christ of his all-sufficient merit, running from Christ the pure fountain, to the filthy puddle and mire of their own merits and satisfaction. And thus poor Catholick creatures, they think themselves trimly washed, whereas (alas) they are not purged from their filthiness, they are as beastly as Swine.

Use.

John. 13. 8.

Seeing we be all defiled with sin, original, actual, old, new ; let us seek to Jesus Christ, and desire to be washed, yea, to be bathed and rinsed in his precious blood : Get one drop of it, and besprinkle our poor souls with it, as Peter saith, head and hands, and all, both soul and body . For that answer given by Christ unto Peter may serve for a warning unto us all : If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me ; which, if we did well consider, as well our own pollution, as also the necessity of Christ's washing, we should answer him, with Peter; O Lord, not only my feet, but my hands and my head.

If

Vsi.

If this were David's estate and condition, that he was so filthy and unclean, (having lain but a short time in sin) that he crieth out again unto the Lord, to wash him, to purge him, to cleanse him. Oh then, what shall we imagine or think of those that not once, but often; not a year, with David, but all the days of their life, have lived in the common custom and practice of sinning; that have drunk down iniquity, as a man drinketh down water? Their damnation doth not sleep. And yet, poor souls, they think, that if they can have but time to remember a few words in the end, as to say, *Lord have mercy on me,* that they shall be saved. But if it did cost David so many sighs, and groans, and tears, as in the sixth Psalm, which was but a short time in comparison of others. They much deceive themselves, that do imagine it is so easie a matter to be washed and cleansed from the pollution of sin, that have lain therein a long time.

And before we can be washed and cleansed from our sins in the blood of Christ, we must have a godly sorrow, which will send us to Christ Jesus; we must see our filthiness, and uncleanness, how we stand in need to be washed; and we must desire it, and beg it with David: O Lord, wash me, rinse me, bathe me in the blood of Christ. Secondly, we must have the hand of faith, by which we must lay hold on Christ's blood and besprinkle our souls with it; even as a man doth wash his face with his hand: So faith is the hand of the soul, to lay hold and

Godly sorrow will send us to Christ,

and apply Christ's blood, and the merit of it, to cleanse us, and wash us from all our sins.

But alas, poor souls, you shall see many a man and woman that are very curious, and careful to wash their bodies, and to wash their cloaths : they will not suffer the least spot in them, but look to have them washed: Yet they can go from year to year, with most vile and filthy souls that even stink with sin, and never desire to be washed and rinsed : Yea, many of those who seem to be very gay and fair outwardly, carry filthy and unclean hearts within ; and if a man could but see into their hearts, and perceive the filthy spots of sin, he would stop his nose, and not endure the smell of them.

VERSE 3.

For I acknowledge mine iniquities, and my sin is ever before my eyes.

David's
Reason
from his
former pe-
tition.

Now David having thus intreated for favour and grace at God's hands, for his great and hainous sins, he doth here labour to move the Lord to pity him, because he doth now most frankly and freely confess his sins, is truly touched and grieved for them ; yea, his poor conscience is now upon the rack, wounded, and distressed, and exceedingly afflicted ; and therefore he intreateth the Lord to pity him : For I acknowledge and confess my sins against

against God, in thy presence, before the Prophets, and before all thy people, yea, the whole Church of God, by leaving this Psalm, as a testimony of my true repentance and sorrow for them.

Hence mark, that there is no place or mercy, nor any peace to be looked for at God's hands, nor any pardon of sin, before a sinner be truly humbled, do freely and franckly confess the same, and humbly acknowledg with grief of heart his sins unto the Lord; where we are to observe two things: First, the Person to whom we must confess our faults. Secondly, the manner how we must confess them.

For the Person, to whom we must confess it is God, as this example of *David* doth teach us, ver. 4. *Against thee, against thee only, have I sinned.* Again, *Psal. 32. 8.* I said, *I will confess my sins unto the Lord,* and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. It is true indeed, we may by our sins wrong men, as *David* did *Uriah*: But being in sin, the chiefest wrong is unto the Lord. The Scribes and Pharisees thought they were corrupt in many things else, yet they held this for a truth, that none could forgive sins but God only, *Mark 2. 7.* And this doth the Lord testify of himself, *Esay 45. 35.* *I, even I am he that putteth away thy iniquities for mine own sake.* *1 Joh. 1. 9.* If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Besides, the precepts in the Word of God, there is recorded the repentance of God's children, who have humbly acknowledged their

Doct. r.
Confessi-
on ever
goeth be-
fore remis-
sion.

Person to
whom.

their sins before God, as *Manasses*, 2 Chr. 33. *David*, 2 Sam. 11. The prodigal Son, Luke 15. So true is that saying, Prov. 28. 13. *He that hides his sin shall not prosper, but he that confesseth them shall have mercy.* And this did *David* prove by his own experience, that so long as he held his peace, Ps. 22. 5. and did not acknowledg his sins unto the Lord, but concealed, smothered, and hid them, so long his poor conscience was upon the rack, his soul was troubled, and greatly disquieted; but after he had confessed them, and repented of them, the Lord forgave them, and shewed him mercy.

Secondly, we must confess our sins also to men, and that both privately and publickly, as the quality of sin requireth: For howsoever we condemn auricular confession, as having in it nothing but policy, and a rack to the conscience; yet we do not only allow, but call and cry for that voluntary confession which every Christian ought to make to their godly Pastor, of such sins as disquiet the conscience; and no doubt great blessings, and comfort follow them that use this godly practice: And therefore, *Josh.* 7. 18. When *Joshua* laboured to bring *Achan* to a sight of his sin, he saith, *My Son, I beseech thee give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and shew me now what thou hast done.* Again, confession must be made unto men, and that in respect of the Church, that the Congregation that hath been offended, may be satisfied; as also that others

thers may be terrified from falling into the same sins, 2 Tim. 4. 26. *Them that sin rebuke openly, that the rest may fear.* And last of all in respect of the sinner himself, that thereby he may be more humbled, as that incestuous person, 2 Cor. 2. 7. that was delivered up to Satan for his sin, which brought him to humiliation : Whereas otherwise, if the punishment were laid only upon their purse, few or none would regard it.

But withal we must know, that a man is not bound to confess his sins to the Minister only, and to none else, as Papists would have men to do to a Frier ; but he may make choice of any other Christian friend, according to that of St. James, *Acknowledg your faults one to another, and pray one for another, &c.*

Seeing true and hearty repentance cannot go without a free and franck confession of sins, and hearty and humble acknowledgement of them : First, this condemneth all those who are so far from confessing them, that they are not ashamed to justify their sins, even to patronize them to plead for them : As, tell men of their sins and impieties, they answer, what need you care, you shall not answer for my sins, take care for your self : So reprove Swearing, Drunkenness, Pride, &c. and men are so far from being humbled, and confessing them, that they justify them, and say they do but as others do, it is the fashion, and they are not alone : And this is a corruption that we have all by kind, to dissemble our sins. Our Mo-

thers

thers breasts have given us no other suck. *Adam*, our first Parent, hath taught us, Gen. 3. 12. when he was examined, he posted off the matter from himself unto his wife, *The woman that thou gavest me, she gave me of the fruit, and I did eat;* and so it is with all of us, we are loath to make our confession of our sins unto God. Mens sins break forth every day, lying, swearing, drunkenness, &c. But where is that man to be found, that hath any care to bewail himself? All this while that men do not confess them, they can have no pardon of them, Luk. 13. 5. *Unless ye repent, ye shall all perish.* Now confession is a special part of true repentance. David he begins with himself, unrips his own bowels first, and saith, O Lord, it is I that have done this wickedness, and committed this sin against thee, against *uriah*, against his wife *Bathsheba*; let me and my Father's house suffer for it, for these sheep have done nothing.

Use 2.

Seeing there is no pardon of sin, till we do confess it, and humbly acknowledg it; Let us every one freely acknowledg and confess our sins unto the Lord, lay them open and naked before him; it is the best way to get pardon of them at his hands. Indeed, in the Court of Man, to confess our sins, is the next way to bring shame and punishment; but in the Court of God it is not so; but the next way to have them covered, is to uncover them, and lay them open unto the Lord. I have sinned, saith David, 2 Sam. 12. *The Lord hath taken away thy sin, thou shalt not*

not die, saith the Prophet. When we confess them, then he will cover them: If we judge our selves, we shall not be judged of the Lord: Oh then, let us not fear to confess our sins, and lay them open unto the Lord with grief and sorrow; yea, let us deal as a poor Prisoner condemned at the Bar; or, as a poor Lazar or cripple, shew our sores, and lay open our wounds, and by that means we shall move the Lord to pity and compassion.

Secondly, That we may so confess our sins, and make such an acknowledgment of them, as may be a true confession, and to bring with it a true and unfeigned repentance;

We must first take heed that we do know our transgressions, the number of them, the greatness of them, the danger of them, how they make us most vile in the sight of God, and most loathsome. We must know, that we deserve Hell fire, and eternal Condemnation for them: For, untill a man know his sin, and his conscience be convicted for it, and withal see the danger of his sin, he will never humbly and heartily confess the same.

I know (saith David) mine iniquity. St. Peter did, although for a time he did he knew not what, as a man in a Trance (for sin may well be called madness) yet afterwards he bethought himself, and considered what he had done, and lamented his folly with tears; and this is required of us all, Lam. 3. 40. O let us search and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord. And the Lord complaineth;

The manner how we must confess our sins.

plaineth, *Jer. 8. 6.* That he did hearken, to see if there were any man that would repent, and turn to the Lord; but there was no man said, *what have I done?*

VII. 1.

And surely this complaint may be taken up against the people of our Land, or Nation, that, notwithstanding God hath cried and called unto us so often from Heaven, by his powerful voice in his Word, by his mercies, and by his judgments, so sensibly, that if the Magicians in *Egypt* were amongst us, they could do no less than acknowledg it to be the finger of God; Yet where is the man almost to be found that looketh back unto his own ways, to ask the question of his own heart, to say, *Alas, what have I done?* or, with *David* here, *I know mine iniquities.*

Now there is a twofold knowledg of our sin: First, general; Secondly, special. General knowledg never worketh any reformation; for this is found (for the most part) in all men, which can say they are sinners: But there is a special knowledg of sin, which God will once discover unto us, either in mercy to our good and salvation, as here, to *David*, to *Peter*, to *Mary Magdalene*, &c. or else in wrath, as he did unto *Judas*, *Cain*, *Achitophel*, &c. to their final condemnation; which may teach us all to pray unto the Lord, so to give us the sight of our sins, as that we never despair of his mercy, that our sins may never rise up against us to our confusion.

Secondly, our Confession of our sins must proceed from sorrow of heart for them, with

a hatred of them, so as nothing do more grieve us than our Offences.

And this our Saviour Christ insinuateth, *Mat. 11.28. When he calleth only such unto him as are weary and laden, even ready to faint under the burthen of his sins.* And this doth *David* himself confess, *Psal. 38. My sins (saith he) are as a weighty burden, too heavy for me to bear.* For, when men can run away with their sins, as though they were as light as a feather, it is an evident token they were never throughly humbled for them.

Thirdly, it must be franck and free, not wrung out by compulsion; as sometimes a wicked man, sometimes under the rod may confess his sins, as *Pharash, Judas*, and the like : But this confession was only by compulsion wrung out of them; it came not from any sorrow or hatred of sin, but for fear of judgment and punishment. But we must be as forward, and as ready to confess them, to the glory of God, as we were to commit them, to his dishonour. Thus did *David* confess his sin, *Psal. 32. 5. I acknowledg and confess my sin nato thee, and mine ini- quities have I not hid.* *Nathan* told *David* he had sinned; which words stole secretly into his heart! For, till he had notice of it, he could not shed a tear; for he thought all was safe and secure. It was God's love to *David*, that the Prophets motion should rowse and stir up such a King as *David* was, to make him dis-throne himself, and forsake his Sceptre, and beat his breast, saying, *I acknowledg mine iniquity, and my sin is ever*

*Exod. 16.
17.*

F before

before me. It must be without all excuse, or lessening of our sins; we may not mince them, or excuse them, nor dissemble them, nor cloak them; but lay them open in their colours, rather aggravating them, than diminishing them, as sometimes St. Austin did.

Fourthly, We must confess our sins, with purpose to forsake them, according unto that of the Prophet, Isa. 55. *Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the ungodly man his own imagination, and return unto the Lord.*

There must be in us a desire to forsake all our sins, and every wicked way, else there's no true repentance : For one sin is a sufficient hold for Satan, and a sufficient bar to keep out Christ Jesus, as we may see by the example of Herod, Mar. 6. Judas, &c.

This shews, that most men and women do not truly repent ; for though they can say, *God be merciful unto us, we are all sinners*; yet in particular they see it not ; no, they think they keep the Commandments of God ; a man can very hardly persuade them, that they break any of the Commandments in particular ; although, in general, and in a confused manner, they confess themselves to be sinners, yet in particular they do not so ; Nay, they are so far from aggravating their sins, that they rather extenuate them by all means possible ; *I am not alone, nor I am not the first, nor I hope I shall not be the last.* For any grief or sorrow for sin, it is as far from them, as they are far from it.

This sheweth, that those, who, though they confess themselves sinners, yea ; in particular,

ticular ; yet, because they do it not with feeling, with hatred and detestation of sin, therefore they be faulty : For we should even with right sorrowful hearts, and wounded souls, confess our sins, with the greatest hatred of them as possibly we can : So, as often as we speak of them, it should make our hearts to yearn, and tears to stand in our eyes.

But most of all, are here condemned those vile beasts and filthy sinners, who are so far from speaking of their filthy and beastly sins with hatred and dislike, that they do in bravery speak of them, with a kind of joy and delight. Now, who would ever think a man to be so vile, to brag of his own shame, and boast of his own filthiness ? If a Prisoner, going in the way to the Gallows, should then brag of his robberies, villanies, and be proud of his halter, what a desperate thing were that ? And yet such filthy beasts there be in the world, who are not ashamed to boast of their own shame and filthiness ; to talk, yea, to glory of their own uncleanness, and of their filthy drunkenness ; How they have drunk their share of so many quarts of wine ; how they have made so many drunk O wretched men ! it is a wonder that the House falleth not on them, as it did on the *Philistines* : or that God raineth not fire and brimstone from Heaven to consume them, as *Sodom* was ; or smite them dead, like *Herod*.

Cause that
moved
David to
confess his
sin.

And my sin is ever before mine eyes.

David having shewed how that he had freely confessed and acknowledged his sins unto the Lord; here he sheweth the cause which moved him so humbly to acknowledge the same: Namely, because they were ever in his sight, and before his eyes; as if he should have said, howsoever I have a long time continued and lain secure in sin, and did not know or see the danger of them; yet now, being told of them, by the Prophet, I see them, and so behold them, that my conscience accuses me of them, and I can have no rest, but my wounded conscience doth urge me, and compel me to confess my sins to thee, desiring thee, O Lord, to chaste me as a Son, but do not dis-inherit me for my disobedience, in having committed these horrid sins and offences against thee.

Where, first of all, we may behold the dangerous effect of sin. When the Devil tempts a man unto it, he doth ever obscure the misery of sin, the curse of God due to sin, the torments of Hell, and the damnation of body and soul in Hell-fire for evermore: These things the Devil doth labour to keep from man's eyes, buzzing only in their ears the profit of sin, gain, commodity, pleasure, delight, and sweetnes of sin; that so shewing only the golden bait of sin, and hiding the poisoned hook, he might move men to run head-long into all sin: But when Satan gets his purpose, and men be in his snare,

snare, and fallen into sin, Oh how will he then press their poor consciences? then he will load them, and set out their sins to the full, in a most ugly form: Nothing then but hell-fire, damnation and the curse of God, that so, if it be possible, he may draw them into the gulf of despair, or like Job's wife, say to them, *Curse God, and die.*

Oh that men would consider this in time, how sin will one day change her countenance, however it commeth at first in a flattering form, pretending nothing but friendship, but in the end will leave a sting behind it, even a guilty conscience, terror of mind, and anguish of Spirit. Wherefore let us fly from sin, as from the biting of a Serpent, that we be not stung therewith unto eternal death: knowing, the wages of sin is Death.

Whereas David's sins being always before him, did urge him to confess them; yea, to repent, and beg the pardon of them: We learn, That the remembrance of our sins, and the calling them to mind, together with a conscience accusing for them, is the way and means to come to true repentance, to make a man confess them, and beg the pardon of them: Whereas, if they slip out of our minds, or we know them not, or we find not our consciences to accuse us of them, alas, we can neither confess them, nor truly be humbled, and beg the pardon of them. And therefore David confesseth here, that by reason his sins were ever before him, he was continually vexed and tormented with the horror

Rom. 6. 23
A Doct.
Sin accus-
ing con-
science, the
means to
bring us to
repentance.

horror of them; his conscience still accused and troubled him, and therefore he is constrained and urged humbly to confess them, and to beg the pardon of them at God's hands: For indeed, repentance is as necessary and as comfortable to a sinner, as a couch to a weary traveller, or as meat to the hungry stomach. Whereas the wrath of God doth ever follow such as have sleepy and drowsie consciences, giving them over to a reprobate sense, to a slumbering spirit, and to hardness of the heart, that they fall to be past feeling, and cannot repent, Rom. i. 28. *Such as regarded not to know God, he gave them up to their hearts lust, unto all uncleanness, and punisheth one sin with another.* And surely it is just with God, that he should forsake us with his grace, that have forsaken him by our sins; according to that of the Prophet, Psa/. 11. *My people would not hear my voice, and Israel would none of me: So I gave them up unto the hardness of their hearts, and they have walked in their own counsel.*

Sight of sin
first step
to Repen-
tance.

So that hence we learn, that a man will never repent truly of his sins, seek to God for pardon: Neither is there any other way or means to be reconciled to God, but this, to feel the weight and burthen of his sins, and feeling his conscience to accuse him, to vex and wound him, till he find God to be merciful, and reconciled unto him for the pardon of them, and the appeasing and quieting of the conscience. And therefore, knowledge must go before repentance; to know, as Nathan told David, what great sins we have com-

committed. St. Austin saith, that many men lose their strength, because they do depend upon their own strength; and if we withdraw our obedience from God, he will withdraw his blessings from us, and then we run head-long into all kind of sin, and so wound our consciences, that we are never at rest.

Seeing till such time as the conscience be wounded for sin, and vexed and tormented with it, a man will never speak for pardon; Then we learn hence, that no man can taste of the sweetnes of God's mercy in Christ for his salvation, until he have tasted of the bitter fruit of sin, and of a wounded and distressed conscience: Look on *Pharaoh* and the *Jews*. And as for those that would taste of God's mercy, and yet are loath to feel the smart of sin, they deceiver themselves. We see, that ere the body be purged, men must take bitter pills, or bitter potions: And as for those who never felt any such grief nor wound of conscience, no such astonishment for their sins, they may justly fear their repentance is not sound, that they have not as yet been truly humbled: For it is certain, that before we can truly repent, and be reconciled to God, we must have the feeling of the smart of sin, and find our hearts troubled, and our consciences wounded. *David* by his repentance made a breach, and by his true contrition pulled down the strong hold of sin, and *Satan*, which the Devil and his legions of fiends had raised in him; for saith he, *My sin is ever before me*: For indeed all our repentance proceeds from God's grace;

Ps. 6. 32
Act. 2. 3.

Such may suspect their Repentance, who feel not sin to wound their consciences.

for we cannot repent when we would, or have it by nature; and the soul which lies dead in sin, can no more perform true repentance, than the body in the grave can dispose it self to the last resurrection. It is the Lord only which plows up the furrows of our hearts; that is, humbles us with a sense of his displeasure, as he did *David*; therefore the root of repentance is God, and his proceeding is by his two hands, Justice and Mercy, which *Jeremy* calls the Hammer and Fire by which the Lord works the soul, and makes it capable of eternal life, and union with Christ: All this *David* did strive for and he watered his eyes by day, and his couch by night, with his tears of true repentance.

This confutes that fond and foolish opinion of many in the World, who if they see any wounded for sin, distressed in soul, crying out of his misery, and feeling his conscience exceedingly terrified, begins to despair of God's mercy: What do men judg of such a man? surely that it is nothing but Melancholy and Dumpishness, and therefore they counsel him to be jocund, to go into merry company, to put away such odd conceits, such vain and foolish fancies; but alas, poor souls, they consider not that it is the special work of God, wounding the conscience for sin, that they feel the wrath of God for sin, and are troubled and vexed for that, and till God give mercy, and reconciliation be had in Christ, there can be no peace.

We learn hence, that it is better to have an accusing conscience for sin, than to have a dead conscience, a benumbed conscience, a sleepy and slumbering conscience, a scared and frozen conscience ; for if a man's conscience do daily bring his sins to mind, so that he sees them before his eyes, then he will not only be grieved for them, but will confess them, and beg the pardon of them ; but when a man hath a slumbering conscience, that is benumbed, then he goes on in sin from day to day, never feeleth any smart of it, nor ever desires the pardon of it ; as the poor Jews, who seeing their fearful estate, cry out, *What must we do to be saved ?* So do all wounded consciences, seeing their fearful sins, and wretched estate, cry out for mercy, and seek for pardon.

Oh, it is a sign of a fearful judgment of God, to have a sleepy, or a drowsie conscience : It is like a wild beast, which so long as it lies asleep, seemeth very tame and gentle, but when he is rowled, flies into a man's face. Even so, howsoever a man's conscience may seem for a time to be quiet, and men may think they have a good conscience indeed, so long as they imagine none knows of their sins and iniquities but themselves ; yet being awaked by the Minister of God, it will break out into humility, as David, saying, *I am the man, I have sinned, and done this evil, and am worthy to have crosses and afflictions come upon me, as I have done.*

Seeing David doth acknowledg here, that his sins being ever before him awaked him,

*Vte 3.
Dead con-
science a-
heavy
judgment.*

Act. 2. 37.

*Doch. 3.
Necessary
duty to
call our
sins to ac-
count.*

and urged him instantly, and earnestly to seek for pardon; we learn, That it is a good thing for us to call our sins to account, to have them often in mind, to set them before our eyes, the greatness, number, and hainousness of them. It was no disgrace for *David* (though he was a King) to fall down at God's mercy seat, and to lay open his sins as he did; it was his next way to obtain quietness to his soul and mind, and to have forgiveness.

Lam. 3.40.

First, it is a good means to prepare to true repentance, and humiliation for them.

Secondly, it is a special means to make us hate them, and dislike them, seeing the danger of them, how loathsome they be in Gods sight,

Thirdly, the remembrance of our sins makes us wary, that we fall not into them again; but our former falls make us to take heed of falling in time to come.

Fourthly, the remembrance of our sins makes us pity other men; because, though they fall dangerously, yet we know we have fallen as well as they; therefore we hope, God will give unto them repentance.

Fifthly, the continual remembrance of our own sins puts us in mind of God's mercy in the pardon of them: And when men easily suffer their old sins to pass away, and slip out of their minds, they will easily fall into new, and easily forget the mercy of God, and how much they be bound unto him. *Paul* gives this excellent example, who rememb'ring how he had persecuted the

church,

church, saith, Notwithstanding, God was merciful unto me. So that the continual remembrance of our sins puts us in mind of God's merciful dealing with us, and must stir us up to thankfulness.

1 Tim. 1.

For if we forget them, the Lord will remember them : and if we remember them, the Lord will forget them. This then should make every man beware, how he forgetteth his sins, and casts them carelessly behind his back ; for this is a sign that God remembers them, and will call that man to account for them.

This shews the great impiety of those men and women, who seek all means to put their sins out of their minds, to smother the checks of their consciences by sports and pastimes, by merry company, or by other means, to keep themselves from the sight of their sins. They cannot abide to hear of them by others, or to imagine of them themselves, but put away the remembrance of them by all means possible, by the delights of the world, and by company, as I said before ; which is even as much, as when a man hath burnt his finger, presently he puts it into cold water, thinking thereby to find ease ; but taken out again, this inflames it the more, and doth give it no true ease. Oh ! this should make men ever repent, and be humbled for their sins. Oh ! this should make them confess their sins with tears, and beg the pardon of them.

Use 2.

Note of a wicked man.

It must stir us up to the serious and often meditation of our sins, to keep them in memory,

Use 2.

Psal. 25.

mory, our old and new sins, open and secret, even sins of our youth, to humble us, and to cause us to keep in mind the endless mercy of God in pardoning of them ; and therefore we should do well to set some time apart to call our life to account : *Tremble and sin not, commune with your hearts upon your bed, and be still :* Where David calls upon Saul's Courtiers, to fear God's judgments and threatenings. It is a special means to humble us, and to move us to repentance, to keep a note of all our offences and faults that we may ever have matter to humble our hard and stony hearts.

Use I.

Cause why
so few do
repent.

We see the cause here why so few do truly repent, and confess their faults unto God, and beg the pardon of them ; Namely, because that their sins be ever out of their sight ; though they pry into, and espy the faults of other men, and have them in their sight, yet do they cast their own behind them ; and by that means, never setting their sins in sight, they forget them, and be never humbled for them ; but the Lord threateneth all such, that if they will not set their sins before them, then will he take the pains to set them all in order before them, one by one, *Psa. 50. I will reprove thee and set before thee the things that thou hast done ; O consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.*

Dott. 4.
Sin once
known
doth ever
accuse till
it be par-
doned.

When, as David saith, in the confessing of his sins, that they were ever in his sight : First, they all this while grieve and vex him, wound his soul and conscience ; We learn, that

that sin once known and felt, doth so accuse and wound the conscience of a poor sinner, that there can be no rest and quietness until it be pardoned : For it is ever in his sight, and before his eyes, troubling and vexing his mind, and wounding his conscience. Therefore this made David to confess, saying, *Thou, O Lord, didst convert my heart, and set my crooked will and wandering mind in frame.* And as it was with David, so it fares with every poor sinner ; after the Lord in mercy opens our eyes, to come to the knowledg of our sins, and our misery by them, so as our consciences do accuse us, and we feel the weight of God's anger pressing down our souls, there can be nothing but hell and anguish for the present time, nothing but extreme sorrow and vexation of spirit, until we find some comfortable answer from God for the pardon of them. As we see a poor Prisoner arraigned, convicted, and condemned to Death ; there is nothing but sorrow, and grief ; no joy in Wife, Child, Friends, Lands, Livings, Gold or Silver ; Meat, or Musick ; Only the gracious pardon of the King can revive him, and make a glad man : So it is with a poor sinner arraigned in his own conscience for sin, convicted and condemned in his own soul, before the barr of God's judgments : Nothing can now comfort him, and cheer him up, and revive his wounded conscience, but a gracious pardon from the Almighty's mercy, sealed with the blood of the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world.

This

Vise 1.
Undire &
course that
worldlings
take.

This shews the miserable and pitiful estate of many thousands in the World, who lye in sin, sleep in sin, and never seek for pardon, never seek for mercy at the hands of God; and if they find and feel their sins, then they run to this vanity, to that pastime, to smother the checks of their consciences, and by merry Company, in Eating and Drinking, Carding, Dicing, &c. seek to stop the mouth of their Consciences, and to smother it. But alas, we see this is cold Musick for a wounded Conscience : *Saul* thought to have prevailed by this, at what time he called *David* to play, and to make Musick before him : but by and by, his wound was greater : For these men that seek by such devices to stop the mouth of their Consciences, they do as a man that is in the fit of a burning Ague ; he is hot, and to cool his heat, he drinketh a draught of cold water ; that indeed (for the present) will somewhat allay the heat of the disease, yet by and by his fit is increased, and made the worse.

Vise 2.

Let us then never give any rest to our souls, until we have gotten the assured persuasion of the pardon of all our offences ; for so long as the conscience doth accuse for sin, so long we shall find no rest nor quietness : No, there is no peace till we be reconciled to God by true repentance ; and till the conscience leave accusing, let us never leave repenting, and truly humble our selves for the pardon of our sins. None can forgive our sins, but God ; all worldly and humane help is not to be respected : Therefore we ought

Rom. 51.

ought to pray, and be most frequent in our petitions, that God would forgive us our sins. Man never goes to heaven for any thing, if he can get it by humane help: when the Physician of the body gives us over, then we are content to become God's Patients.

It is to be observed, that *David*, in the confession of his sins, saith, I acknowledg my sins; not speaking of his hainous sin of Adultery alone, but of many sins wrapped up together from his youth: For he did not only commit Adultery with *Bathsheba*, the Wife of *Uriah*, but shed also his guiltless and innocent blood: Yea, with him caused, as it is like, many of his good Subjects and loyal Souldiers to be slain. He sought for to cover his sins closely and securely, by bidding *uriyah* to go home to his Wife, that so the child might be thought to be his. And to all these he added this, that he laid the whole Church open to the Enemy, and to the Anger of God.

Hence note then for our instruction, that *David* confesseth, one sin will never go alone, but sin goes by couples, by heaps, one in the neck of another, as he that taketh a Chain by the end, and pulleth but one link, all the rest do follow: So, if a man give liberty to one sin, that sin will not go alone, but draweth another: Adultery will often bring murther with it; swearing, lying with it; so drunkenness, whoredome, &c. The Apostle biddeth us, *Not to walk as children of darkness, in surfeiting and drunkenness; not in chambering and wantonness; not in strife,*

*Doct. 5.
Sin never
goes alone.*

*Rom. 13.
13.*

strife and envying : Shewing unto us, that sins go by couples, and one draweth on another, and will hardly go alone.

It is like a Gangrene, or Canker, it fretteth and eateth further and further; the hand infecteth the Arm, and the foot the leg, and so one Member another, till it hath spread it self over the whole body, if the part that is infected be not cut off at the beginning. This doth the Apostle teach, 2 Tim. 2. 16. *Shun profane and vain bablings, for they increase unto more ungodliness, and their words will fret as doth a Canker.* St. James also sheweth the fruitfulness of sin, saying, *when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin, and sin when it is finished, it brings forth death.* And as sin doth increase, so doth God's judgments, Levit. chap. 26. 21. 23. *If ye walk stubbornly against me, and will not obey me, I will then bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins; yet, if by these ye will not be reformed by me, but walk stubbornly against me, then will I also walk stubbornly against you; and I will yet smite you seven times for your sins.* And thus we see again, how God will keep a proportion betwixt our sins and his punishment.

Use 3.

Seeing this is the cursed nature of sin, that one will never go alone, but one will draw on another, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Murder, &c. It stands us all in hand to take heed that we give liberty to no sin, live in none, delight in none; for if we do, we shall surely find, that one sin will never go alone; but let us abhor all: Hate every sin, and strive against

against all. We see this common in the World, that if a man shall yield to one sin, by and by it will draw him to another ; and often (as it was in *David*) Whoredome will bring Murder with it, sometimes of the Husband, sometimes of the Child, sometimes of two or three ; and therefore let us be very careful to shun and avoid every sin, live in none : For though one sin be enough to carry a man to the gulph of Hell, yet one will never go alone by it self.

We may see this in the example of *Cain*, Gen. 4. 8. He was reproved of God for his malice conceived against his Brother; But he hearkned not to the voice of the Lord, but hardened his heart, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of his Brother. This appeareth in *Judas*, Matth. 26. Having once entertained covetousness in his heart, he fell from covetousness to treason ; and at the last became his own Judg and Executioner.

The like we may behold in *Saul*, 1 Sam. 16. 1. Who fell away from God step by step, until the Spirit of God had utterly forsaken him, and he brake out into open rebellion against God Almighty.

For as amongst all the blessings which the Lord doth bestow upon the Sons of men in this world, a soft and tender heart is one of the greatest, which is checked, and controuled, and soon made to bleed ; so there can be no greater curse laid upon a man than to have a rebellious heart, which hoardeth up every day vengeance against it self.

Note.

VERSE IV.

4. *Against thee, against thee only have I sinned,
and done this evil in thy sight : That thou
maist be just when thou speakest, and pure
when thou judgest.*

In this
verse, Da-
vid ac-
knowledg-
eth his spe-
cial sins.

Two parts

Now in this Verse, and the two which follow, David proceedeth in the humble acknowledgment and confession of his sins : First, his actual sins : Secondly, from them he cometh to the fountain and original of all sin ; namely, his natural corruption, wherein he was conceived and born ; and this Original sin he speaketh of in the next Verse following.

This fourth Verse containeth in it two parts : First, a free acknowledgment of his particular, special, and actual sins. In the second, he doth clear the Lord of all cruelty and injustice, that howsoever the Lord had not only sharply reproved him by the ministry of *Nathan*, but also punished him, and grievously afflicted him for his sins, in taking away the Child that was born in Adultery : Yet, he doth acknowledg the Lord to be just and righteous in all his ways.

In the first part of the Verse, consider, first, the party to whom he confesseth, *Against thee, against thee only* ; where he sheweth the great dolour and extream grief of his mind for his sin against God, in that he doubleth the words, *Against thee, against thee*. Secondly, we are to observe how he doth

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acknowledg his special and particular sins ;
namely, Adultery, Murther, and shedding
of innocent blood, *I have sinned, and done this
evil in thy sight.*

(*Against thee.*) These words are expounded diversly : First, that it is as much as if *David* should have said, Oh Lord, howsoever I have grievously offended in committing Adultery and Murther ; yet I have so hid my faults from man, that there is none that knew it but thou alone ; so that he acknowledgeth all the sin was against God, because no mortal man was privy to his sins.

Others expound it thus : That although *David* had offended against Man, yet he was specially wounded and grieved, for that he had broken the Law of God ; so that though it be true, that he had done great wrong to his faithful servant and most loyal subject, *Uriah* ; yet here was that which pricked his heart, and wounded him to the quick, namely, because he had offended his most merciful and loving God. As if he should have said, O Lord my God, although the whole World should clear me, and no man living should accuse me, yet it grieveth me at the very heart, because I have offended thee my most merciful God.

Hence first I note, That howsoever a man may hide his sins from men and Angels, yet it is impossible to hide them from the All-seeing eyes of the Almighty. *David* had committed Adultery closely, he had laboured to hide it and cover it, by marrying *Bathsheba* the Wife of *Uriah*, but yet alas, all his

Doct. I.

A man's
sins are o-
pen before
God.

shifts

Gen. 37.
1 Reg. 21.
Rev. 1. 18.
Psa. 51. 4.
Be, as thou
seemest;

Or, seem
as thou art.

shifts and cunning fetches could not hide it from God : He saw it, and observed it ; and now David confesses the same ; *Against thee, against thee* : The like we shall see in Joseph's brethren, when they sold him into Egypt ; so in Jezebel, in putting Naboth to death ; so in these days men be cunning to commit Adultery closely, and in the twilight, in a dark corner, in close and secret manner, to lie, steal, deceive, commit adultery, fornication, and all uncleanness : But (poor souls) they do deceive themselves, for they cannot hide their sins from God's all-seeing eyes, Night and Day is all one to him ; yea, the Lord doth search the very hearts and reins, *understanding our very thoughts long before* ; 1 King, Chap. 8. 39. *The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth every word of the mind.* Again, Psal. 139. 4. *Thou knowest my sitting down, and my rising up, thou understandest my thoughts long before* ; there is not a word in my tongue, but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether. And surely when this persuasion taketh place, that the Lord is present every where, and beholds all things ; there doth Religion, Conscience, and true Obedience begin in that man. For he that hath the Lord always before him, will not greatly fall, Psal. 19. 8. Heb. 4. 13. For the Lord will find out every transgression, though never so secretly concealed ; which may teach us, in all things to keep Faith, and a good Conscience ; for although we may delude men, yet we cannot deceive the Almighty.

This

This condemns the extream folly and madnes of men and women, who, if they can hide their faults from men, they care for no more : And therefore, they do labour to commit them closely and secretly. But use all thy skill and policy, yet thou canst by no means hide thy sins from the clear sight of God.

*Use 1.
Folly of
sinners de-
scribed.*

Thou maist lie, dissemble, and deceive so closely, that neither men nor Angels can detect thee : Thou maist commit Adultery in the dark, and under a Canopy, so as no man living shall be privy to it : Thou maist steal when none can see thee ; but all this while, remember that thou standest naked and discovered before God : He sees thee, his All-seeing eyes, like to a flame of fire, pierce into thy heart and entrails. Many men, like Gehazi, when they have sinned, can wipe their mouths smoothly, and demurely say, *Thy servant went no whither.* But let them remember ever, that it is impossible to hide their transgressions from God, though they may cover them from men : But of this hereafter.

Heb. 4.13.

This same Doctrine may serve for an excellent preservative against all secret sins : for this is the cursed nature of man, to abstain many times from actual sins, only for shame, or for fear of punishment, which otherwise would make no conscience of sin. Oh that such men would remember, that tho' they be out of the sight of men, yet they be in the presence of the Almighty ; he sees them, and beholds them, even in the darkest

Use 2.

est night, and in the secret corner ; his eyes are like to a flame of fire, *Rev. 2. 18.* And although men may blear the eyes of men, yet they cannot blear the eyes of the Almighty.

It would be an excellent means to withhold them, and keep them from many horrible crimes, which otherwise they would commit. For the Lord looketh narrowly upon us, and searcheth very strictly into us; we cannot have the least unclean thought within us, but he, who is most pure, doth see and behold us. He could discover *Judas* his hypocrisy, and therefore called him a Devil. He sees again *Nathanael's* sincerity, and therefore pronounceth him a true Israelite, *in whom there was no guile.* So that they that commit sin in secret, he that sees in secret, will one day reward them openly. When *Cain*, *Gen. 4. 5.* brought unto God an Oblation of the fruit of the ground, he had no regard to him, nor to His offering, because the Lord saw the secret hypocrisy of his heart. And this is the reason that *David* useth to perswade *Solomon* his Son to have a care to learn and practise the Will of God, *1 Chro. 28. 8.* *And thou Solomon, my Son, know thou the God of thy Fathers, and serve him with perfect heart, and with a willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts.*

Doct.
What sorrow it is
that accom-
panies Repen-
tance.

Whereas the Prophet *David* repeateth the words, *Against thee, against thee:* Here mark the extream sorrow and grief of *David's* heart, that he had sinned against his merciful God. What was it that so

so grieved his soul ? The shame of the sin could not ; for that was not known but to God only : Neither fear of punishment ; for what man durst be so bold as to call him to account ; but that he had been so vile and wretched, to sin against his most loving God ; this was the thing that made his heart to bleed : Which must teach us all this Lesson, that whosoever we fall into any sin, this consideration, above all others, should sink deepest into our hearts ; namely, the consideration of the Person whom we have offended, and that not simply against man, but against God himself.

And this sin of *David* is aggravated in divers respects.

First, *Nathan* telleth him, Almighty God had bestowed upon him that Kingdom, and the Wives of his Lord, and if that had been too little, he would have given him more,
2 Sam. 12. 8.

Secondly, that *David*, a man whom God had so highly honoured, that had taken him from a Sheep-fold, and gave to him a Scepter ; which by his mighty power made him escape the hands of all his enemies, and had graced him with the gift of his Spirit ; who had made so great proceedings in Religion, and the worship of God : It could not but cut him and wound him at the very heart, that he should so wickedly and foully fall into such grievous sins.

Thirdly, in that his example should bring a great slander to the Church of God, and open the mouth of the uncircumcised *Philistines*,

The person whom he had offended.

David's sin aggravated.

2 Sam. 12.

True note
of Repen-
tance.

sines, to reproach and revile them, as we see in *Shimeii*.

Fourthly, in that he had by his sins laid open the Church and People of God unto his judgments, to plague and punish them.

Now from this practice of *David*, we learn that which I taught before, namely, that the children of God are grieved for sin, because it offends and displeases their merciful God. *David* needed not to have been so much troubled for his sin; either in shame, for it was not known but to God alone; or punishment, for none could call him to account; but, that he had offended his merciful God and loving Father, it did torment and vex his conscience exceedingly: So every child of God that truly repents of sin, grieves more because it offends God, than for fear of shame or punishment; as we see it in *David*, Psal. 119. *I have bid thy word within my heart, that I might not sin against thee.* The like we may see in *Joseph*, Gen. 29. when he was tempted to lewdness by his adulterous Mistress, his answer is worthy to be remembred of us; *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* The wrong that he should have done unto his Master did not so much prevail with him, as that he knew he should sin against God: And the like may be said of *Peter*, Mat. 26. who remembiring how kind and loving Christ had been to him, even to pray to his Father for him, when Sathan desired to buffet him; That told him, Mat. 16. *That the gates of hell should not prevail against him:*

This

This looking back of this his Master wounded him to the heart, that he should sin against him, so cowardly to deny him.

Well, seeing this is the nature of true repentance, of godly sorrow, and remorse of Conscience for sin, that the child of God is grieved for his sin, because it displeaseth God, his most loving and merciful Father; as in *Joseph*, *David*, and the prodigal Son, &c. Let us labour to find our hearts thus affected, that we can mourn for sin, because it is sin that offendeth God our loving Father: Though none know of it, nor could accuse us for it; nay, although there were no Hell, nor Judgment for to condemn us, yet that we find our hearts wounded for our secret sins, for our close and hidden transgressions; because we know they offend our most gracious God and loving Father.

Vſe. 1.

Let it be far from us to say, with *Pharaoh*, Exod. 5. who is the Lord, that I should be afraid to sin? Oh know, (O man) whatsoever thou art, that exaltest thy self in this manner, to sin with a high hand against the Almighty, that the Lord is a consuming fire: It is he that drowned *Pharaoh* and all his Host, Exod. 14. It is he that made *Jerusalem* a heap of stones, Mat. 26. It is he that suddenly destroyed *Herod*, Act. 12. and sent fire upon *Sodom*, Gen. 19. Learn therefore to know God aright, and it will make thee quake and tremble to sin against him.

This sheweth, that most men's repen-

Vſe 2.

tance is but counterfeit and unsound:

Gen. 39.

For, were it not for fear of shame and punishment, they could be content to commit sin, to live in sin from day to day, as Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph continually to sin and uncleanness: Alas, she thought not that God would see and behold it. But whatsoever thou art, unless thou find thy heart humbled for thy close and hidden sin, and thy secret corruptions, I tell thee, thou art not truly humbled; the veriest Beast and Atheist that ever lived, may confess his known sins, and in regard of the shame and punishment, be sorry for them; as Pharaoh, Judas, Saul, Simon Magus, &c. But here is godly sorrow, which brings repentance never to be repented of: To be grieved for sin, though we should have neither shame nor punishment, seeing it offendeth a gracious and merciful God: As we see two children, one is a natural, loving, and dutiful child, and he is loath to offend his Father, though he never corrects him, because he sees his Father kind unto him. Another that is of a froward nature, he is loath to offend before his Father, for fear of the whip; and therefore out of his Father's sight he will play his pranks.

Ex. 20.
2 Sam. 1.
Mat. 27.
Act. 8. 25.

A Simile.

Doct. 3.
A penitent person never excuses sin.

In that David thus lays open his sin, though it was secret, and doth aggravate it: We learn, That he that truly repented of his sins, will not excuse it, mince it, hide it, and cloak it, and seek starting holes to conceal it; but he will truly and humbly acknowledg it, lay it open, and make it manifest unto God. He doth not blame the folly

of

of the woman, nor by any means seek to hide his sins, but layeth them open before the Lord : *Against thee have I sinned.* So it is the manner of God's children that do truly repent, to lay open their sins in the worst and vilest form, to make them greater, not lesser.

Well then, this doth shew, that those men are not truly humbled, neither yet have truly repented, that do seek starting holes for their sin : I am not alone ; if I go to Hell, I shall have more company ; It is but the fashion ; and I do no worse than swear by Faith, Troth, &c. the Lord I hope will pardon me. This excusing and cloaking of sin is a token of a naughty and dissembling heart, that That man or woman is not truly humbled as they should : We see this in Saul, he was so far from aggravating and increasing his sin, that he found out many excuses ; *The people did it, and it was to offer Sacrifice :* So the wicked, in their Pilgrimage, are so far from confessing their sins, that they rather excuse them. So that it is a true note of a wicked and graceless heart to excuse sin, to hide it, and cover it ; and he that doth so, shall never find mercy.

Use 2.
Note of
wicked
men.

1 Sam. 15.
Mat. 15.

Prov. 28.
13.

Against thee, against thee only have I sinned.

IT may here be demanded, how David could say, that he had only sinned against God ? Did he not sin against Uriah his faithful servant, and loving subject : First, in committing Adultery with his Wife, and

then in causing his guiltless blood to be shed ? how then could David say here, *Against thee (only) have I sinned ?*

I answer, First, David had sinned indeed against *uriab*, and that two several ways : First, in his Wife, not in his goods ; for then perhaps he might have made amends ; but taking his Wife out of his bosom (as *Nathan telleth him*) he could never make recompence : When *Abimelech* a heathen King, *Gen. 20.* did ignorantly take *Abraham's* wife into his house, when he knew the same, (although he defiled her not, yet) gave *Abraham* a large gift for satisfaction. What satisfaction then might David give, being not a Heathen man, but a Prophet of the Lord, who wittingly takes the Wife of *Uriab* and defiled her ?

Secondly, besides his Wife, he taketh away his Life also : The Devil could say, *Job 2. 4. Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his Life* ; yet, as precious as a man's life is unto him, David addeth this injury to the former, taking away his Life also.

Again, David sinned not only against the Husband, but against the Wife also, corrupting her chaste mind, and alluring her unto wickedness.

And unto this sin committed against *uriab*, and his Wife, I might add the sin against the child begotten in Bastardy : The innocent blood of all those of his Loyal Subjects that were slain with *uriab* ; his sin against his own house and Family ; as also

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his transgressions against the whole Church and people of God, laying them open to God's judgments for his sake. But yet, all these sins against men, how great or how grievous soever they were, he accounteth them as nothing in comparison of his sin against God : *Peter*, he must have a filly Cock to remember him of his sin ; *David*, he must have a *Nathan* to tell him, saying, *Thou art the man* ; and therefore, saith he, *Against thee only have I sinned*.

Secondly, I answer, that all sins, of what sort soever they be, they be great sins, because they be against the Law of the Almighty ; and were it not for the Law of God forbidding sin, and commanding virtue, there should be no sin : For what is sin but the transgression of the Law of God ? and therefore *David* acknowledgeth his sins were against God, he hath rebelled, and transgressed his Law and Commandements : He had not now to do with *Uriah*, or any mortal man, but with the just and most righteous God, whose holy Law he hath most rebelliously broken and violated : For if the Lord had not forbidden men to commit adultery, it should be no sin ; and if the Lord had not said, *Thou shalt not kill*, it were then no more sin to kill a man, than to kill a dog : But seeing the Law of God forbiddeh it, therefore it is a sin, and deserveth eternal damnation, if not repented of. Omission of the duty which God requires at our hands, is as bad as the commission of the act it self ; good men will startle at the

Mat. 5. 21.

least sin, like Joseph, who said, *How can I do this thing, and not sin against God?* God forbid that I should do it; and as God hath forbid us to do this sin, and many such others, so (good God) do thou still forbid us by thy preventing grace, to do it, or the like sins.

Doff. 5.
God alone
can forgive
sin.

Seeing all sin is the transgression of the Law of God, whether it be immediately, as the sins of the first table; or mediately, when in sinning against our Brother, we do sin against God: It followeth, that God alone can pardon and forgive sin; for it belongeth to him alone to pardon the fault, against whom it was committed: But all sin is against God's Law, therefore he alone can pardon and forgive it. And this is affirmed by the Pharisees, *Luk. 5. 21. Who can forgive sin but God alone?*

No creature hath this power; for he that can forgive sins and trespasses, must be able to take away the punishment of sin, which is Death, Hell, and Damnation. Now then, to say, that a man can properly forgive sin, it is in effect to say, that a man hath power over Death and Hell, which cannot possibly be.

Doff. 1.

Seeing none can pardon sin but God only, because all sin is against God alone: No man on earth, no Saint or Angel in Heaven, can pardon and forgive sins, but only Almighty God. This condemneth the blasphemous and erroneous Doctrine of the Church of Rome, who do hold, and teach, that the Pope can as truly, and as properly forgive sins,

sins, as God himself. This one point of Doctrine, taught and held by the Church of Rome, doth prove their Pope to be Antichrist, even that man of sin that the Apostle speaketh of; who makes himself equal to God. And as Almighty God can forgive sins, so will his Holines forgive sin; and whereas God never gave any sinner pardon of his sins, before they were committed, and repented; yet the Pope can, and doth give out his Pardons for a sum of Money, for sins past, present, yea, for twenty years to come; for treason, for murther, adultery, yea, any sin. Than which what can be more blasphemous, and dangerous, to give men Licence to commit sin, and open a gap to all manner of Villany? For who will be afraid to sin, if he may have a pardon for sin before it be committed.

Therefore, when we have committed a sin, let us not think to fly from God, as from a temporal Judg; no, rather run we unto him by our confessing and acknowledging our sins, and then he will forgive us our sins; for he that hides his sin, shall not prosper; but he that confesseth his sins shall find mercy. We have too little shame in us when we commit sin, and too much shame in us when we confess it: For without confession, repentance is but a dumb shew: for our confession is a glory to God, and much honour we do unto him by our confession; but so long as we do not confess our sins, we are aliens and strangers at the Throne of Grace and Mercy.

Pope An-
tichrist.

Horrible
impiety.

We must be humbled before we can be honoured ; we must be broken by our repentance, before we can be made vessels of glory. There is commonly a disease, before there can be a cure. All the holy men of God still confessed their sins, before they found favour at God's hand. David's confession was from his heart, it was really, and a true saying, *I have sinned* : For confession without sorrow of heart, is but lip-labour ; so the ear without observing, is but ear-service ; and charity without the heart, is but hand-labour. The Psalmist saith plainly, That *he that doth not confess his sins, shall not prosper* ; I say, those that will not repent and confess their sins while they live, shall one day come with shame in their faces, crying to the Hills to cover them, and the Rocks to fall upon them, with fear in their hearts, and a guilty conscience in their bosoms.

Seeing David confesseth that he had sinned against God alone, he doth acknowledg, though all men should pardon his sins, and wink at them, yea, should seek to flatter him being a King, yet he could not be so satisfied, because the sin was against God's laws and Commandments ; and therefore he seeketh to God for pardon : So when we sin against men, offend our neighbour and brother, by lying, adultery, murder, &c. Yet let us know we have to do with God ; and though all men should pardon us, and connive at our sin, yet unless the Lord seal our pardon, it is not worth a button. When great

great men sin by adultery and murder, by oppression and cruelty, they have their claw-backs, and flatterers, who will smooth and flatter them, lessen and excuse their sins, yea, say all is well done; but alas, when the Law of God is broken, unless he pardon, all the flattering and smoothing of men, is nothing worth. And let us remember, that though we pass by our sins, that they are forgotten; yet they are not like our feeble bodies, which grow weaker and weaker, but they grow and increase, and in time will reach up to Heaven, and cry for vengeance against us.

Seeing all sin, (to speak properly) is against God, because it is the breach of his Law, therefore it followeth, that all the punishing of sin belongs only to God; He alone is the avenger of sin: *Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay it.* Where the Apostle sheweth, that all punishing and revenging of sin belongs to the Lord alone, because that God alone is the person which is wronged and injured, and not man (to speak properly) seeing not man's law, but God's law is violated and broken; and if his law were not broken, no man, nor any other Creature should have the least cause to complain; and therefore, all punishing and vengeance for sin belongeth properly to God, and unto such whom he shall appoint to be his Lieutenants on earth, and Ministers to stand in his stead to punish offences.

And therefore, first, this sheweth, that those men do much offend, who, when the Law of God is broken by wicked and un-

Use. 3.

Rom. 12.
19.

godly men, can wink at their sin, and will not unsheathe the Sword put into their hands, to the end to smite the same ; but can suffer many great and horrible sins to be committed; that the Lord himself many times is slain by the Sword, Plague, Pestilence, or otherwise, to execute judgment on ungodly men, sweeping them away by heaps.

Use. 4.

This practice of *David* condemns the common practice of the world : If men do sin, and do some evil that is known to the world, what do they then ? They presently seek to pacifie the party offended, to stay his displeasure, either by money, or by friends, or by some other means : But alas, they regard not the anger of God, whose Majesty is offended, and his Law transgressed. But *David* here acknowledgeth, that he had not to do with man, but with God, whose most holy and righteous Law he had broken. And although all men would willingly have pardoned the fault, yet that could not content him, till he had gotten the pardon of God sealed in the blood of Christ Jesus. So let us, though we must and may labour to be reconciled to men, yet let us look up higher to the hand of God, to be reconciled unto him, to beg pardon at his hands, and to bear one with another. Alas, what shall it boot us to get the King's pardon for murder, adultery, theft, &c. if the King of Heaven pardon not, and do not forgive the same ? What if we can appease the anger of man, and be in danger of the just and severe anger of the eternal and everlasting

Note.

sting God? And therefore let us go to God, fly unto him, labour for reconciliation with him. For David's sins were seen with the eye of God's providence, and with the eye of justice; for it was God's love to him, to send him this Prophet, to let him know that he had done wickedly, there was God's favour: Then to tell him he would punish him, and his people, there was his justice. David, after he had cast his eye upon Bathsheba, did so study and labour to get her to his will, even as a man in the Summer-time, that will spend a whole day to get a butterfly, which obtained, is not worth a man's pains: So it was with David, nothing but sorrow came after; nor any quiet rest he found, till he came to ask pardon. He lay, as I said before, ten moneths in this sleep of sin, which St. Bernard said, was a brother to death: But when he knew his errour, he was then glad, and said, the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping; his former mirth is now turned into a river of tears; his sin stopped the grace of God, and hindred his devotion, and made him thus forget himself. David had first nature, then grace; first here was darkness, then light; first an evening, then a day. He was in the bed of security and content, till Nathan, the light of grace, came and told him, *Thou art the man.* David at that time was more sensible of sin than grace. David's greatest pleasure (as he thought) we see proves his greatest bane and sorrow: David all that while had a smiling face, yet had a gnawing worm within him; his

his Conscience, that did never cease, till it was rooted out; his sleep was no true rest, but it was like a Drunken mans sleep, which is no true repose, but full of horror and trouble: Never had he any true sleep. For his little time of pleasure, there followed a world of sorrow, which made him thus to seek to God, by prayer and tears, saying, *Against thee only have I sinned, and don't this evil.*

Object. If any do object, It seemeth that wrongs done to men, are no sins, and not to be repented of.

Answe.

I answer, That followeth not: For whether the wrong be done directly against God himself, as the Commandements of the first Table concern God; Or, indirectly against God, and directly against our Brother, as all the sins of the second Table concern our brethren; Yet, inasmuch as the Law of God is broken, either in the first or second Table. Therefore the chiefest fault and wrong is against God himself; yet we are not to think, that offences done against men are no sins, but that we are to be humbled for them; because, in sinning against our Brother, we sin against God, whose law we break; And therefore, we must restore fourfold, we must be reconciled to our Brother, and seek to right wrongs done unto him. Thus much of the Person, to whom David confesseth: Not to any Mass-Priest, but to God alone, who alone was offended, and who alone can pardon his great fault.

Now in the second place, we are to come unto the thing confessed, namely, his particular

cular sins and impieties: *And done this evil in thy sight.* In the former words, I have sinned, he speaks more generally; in these words he points out his particular and special sin: *And done this evil, adultery, and murder, in thy sight.*

Mark what is that which most wounds David's conscience, and troubles his mind; not so much the fear of shame and reproach in the World, nor yet the fear of punishment; but his sin, his vile sin, it is it that wounds him, that galls him, and doth kill his heart, and grieves his poor soul: *Against thee, against thee have I sinned;* as if he should have said, O my God, it grieves me exceedingly, and wounds my heart, that ever I should be so vile, to sin against thee my gracious and merciful God: I care not for the shame of the World, or fear of punishment; but my sin, my sin is that which doth wound me, and gripeth me at the heart, and hath made that partition wall between me and thy saving grace. David, when he had committed this sin of Adultery and Murder, and was so long tied with the fetters of the flesh for the space of ten moneths, that he saw not his sin; yet God of his mercy and love presently dispatches and sends grace into his heart, and opens the eyes of his Reason, and causes him to have compunction and sorrow of heart, in these words, saying, *I have sinned; against thee only have I sinned.*

So that our lesson is this, That the child of God that truly repents, nothing more grieveth

grieveth him than sin, because it is sin, and breaks the Law of God ; he is more grieved for sin, than either for shame or punishment.

Vsi 5.

Well, seeing this is true repentance, to be grieved for sin, and that, more than for all other things; not for fear of shame, or the punishment, so much as because it offends a merciful God, and loving Father. Let us try our repentance ; Art thou grieved more for sin than any thing else, because it offendeth God, and displeaseth him ? and couldst thou mourn for sin, if there were no shame nor punishment, hell nor judgment ? It is a certain sign of true repentance ; but alas, those that can weep for fear of shame and punishment for sin, many times are nothing at all grieved for sin, in regard of God, whose most holy and perfect Law is broken ; and therefore their repentance is not sound. We must labour for true remorse and sorrow, and not forget our sins ; we must call to mind every night what we have done in the day, what we have committed, and what we have omitted ; this is the way to repent.

Doit. 5.
Acknow-
ledgment
of particu-
lar sins re-
quired.

Mark how *David* doth not only in general acknowledg his sin, but he points out his particular evil, and special sin of close adultery and murder, *I have done this evil*, (this grievous sin) *in thy sight*. *David* found the depth of God's mercies by his confessing of his sins for he waded through the Sea of God's Judgments, as a Lamb through a shallow brook of water : Howsoever (saith he) I laboured to smo-

smother and hide it, yet thou wast an eye-witness, and very privy unto it. So, then hence we may learn, that in true repentance, there must be an acknowledgment and confession of our particular sins, and offences, that we may say, *I have sinned, and done this evil in thy sight*; Lying, Stealing, Drunkenness, Whoredome, Murder, &c. We must come to particular and special sins; David he acknowledgeth his particular sins, of numbering the people; and of matching with the uncircumcised Nations. David seeing he had no way to satisfie this trespass, nor cure his wounded conscience, immediately makes his address to the Lord, saying, O Lord, give me now Cœlestial comfort, such as the world cannot afford me, which I so doted on; for I know now mine own weakness and infirmity, which thou hast revealed unto me in mercy; and now I am more sensible of my own miserable estate, than ever I was before; which I have committed in thy sight.

And thus do the people of *Isræl* deal in their Conversion, *1 Sam. 12. 19.* *Pray for thy servants to the Lord, that we dye not; for we have sinned in asking us a King, besides all our other sins.* So the Apostle Paul, *1 Tim. 1. 13.* declareth there, that many things troubled him; yet this especially, that he had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and oppres-sour, not worthy to be called an Apostle. This appeareth likewise by the example of the *Jews*, *Act. 2.* As also in the conversion of *Zacchæus*, *Luke 19.* who having been a griper, and an oppressour, offered to make full resli-

i Ch. 21.
Ezr. 9.

restitution : So that we see it is a certain note of true repentance, to be touched with the feeling of a man's particular sins committed against God.

Seeing *David*, and all the servants of God, when they have been truly humbled, have repented and confessed their particular sins unto the Lord ; this shews most men and women have not true repentance, but only the shadow of it. Alas, the vilest Atheist in the world, a Reprobate, and one that shall never be saved, may confess this in a general and confused way, We are all sinners ; but if we will truly repent indeed, we must look to confess our particular sins, to find them out one by one, and to acknowledg them unto the Lord with grief, sorrow, and hatred of them ; but alas, most men and women can content themselves in general terms, to confess they be all offenders, although they know in particular wherein they have offended ; yea, if they be examined in particular, they do think they keep all the Commandments of God : Some think every sigh and sorrow, or a tear shed, is repentance, but so should Worldlings repent ; some think every little pang and cross in the world for sin is repentance, then should *Pharaoh* repent ; some think that a little weeping, and lamenting for sin, is repentance, then should *Cain*, *Esaū*, *Judas*, repent ; some think that a days humbling of themselves, or a days fasting is repentance ; but so should *Ahab* repent ; some think that good Works, and a little Alms-deeds, upon their Death-beds, is repen-

repentance ; so should every sick man repent at his leisure : Some think that to cry God mercy, or, the Lord have mercy upon them, is repentance ; so should every fool repent ; See therefore how many are deceived in their repentance ; *David's Repentance* was different from these, for he charged his mind, saying, in the 119. Psal. 50. v. *I have considered my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.*

But we must uncase our selves, and uncover our particular sins, if we would have God to cover them with the Robe of Christ's righteousness ; The eye cannot see it self, it is true ; if we keep and hide our sins within us, we shall never see the danger which will befall us : So, if a sick man come to the Physician, and only tell him he is sick, and never shew him his particular grief, and disease that troubleth him, and the manner thereof, with all the Circumstances belonging to the same, he can never look to be cured : So, if we come to God, the Physician of our souls, and say only *We have sinned*, we cannot assure our selves of pardon ; our unknown sins we must therefore confess generally ; but our known sins we must confess particularly, as the Prophet *David* here doth, *And done this evil* : So in the first book of the *Chron.* chap. 12. *I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing*, that is, Numbring of the people. So that we see it stands us greatly in hand, even with grief of heart to confess our particular sins, and to give sentence against our own selves, and to pray as for

for life and death for the pardon of them, otherwise our repentance is, as it were, but in shew, and for fashion sake, which is never acceptable with Almighty God.

Use 2.

Seeing then it is necessary, in true repentance, to seek out our special sins, and particular evils and impieties : We see that it stands us in hand to be througely acquainted with the Law of God ; for by the knowledg of the Law comes the knowledg of sin ; and that man that hath the best insight in the Law of God, hath the greatest sight of his sin, and of his misery, and is most humbled, and most stirred up to seek to God for mercy ; and they which have least knowledg of the Law, know least of their sins and misery, and are most proud, and least humbled, neither can they truly repent.

For as a sick man is then most dangerously sick, when he hath no feeling of his infirmity ; so a sinner is then in the greatest misery, when he thinketh himself to be no sinner : Such a one is far off from mourning and sorrowing for sin, from turning from them, and returning to God, seeing he taketh himself to be in good case, and to stand in need of no repentance. And such were the Pharisees in the days of Christ, whom he reproved, Mat. 9. 12. The whole need not the Physician, but those that are sick. *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

And

And done this evil in thy sight.

Sin may well be called an evil, both because it is the cause of all evil, both in soul and body ; for all judgments, plagues, and punishments, be but the fruit that comes of sin ; sickness, poverty, plague, pestilence, shame, wars ; all judgments be the fruits of sin.

Secondly, because sin doth displease God, and offendeth his divine Majesty : therefore it is called an evil of evils.

Thirdly, because this evil of sin infects heaven and earth, and brings evil to the creatures of God under Heaven.

Well, seeing sin is an evil, it displeaseth God, it brings all punishments, yea, eternal death in the world to come ; and seeing it infects heaven and earth with the poison of it, how should we hate and abhor sin, quake at it, be afraid to commit that which is the cause of all evils : But alas, though sin be the cause of all evil, yet we see men fear not sin, they shun it not ; yea, they which do fear fire and water, plague and pestilence, yet dare be doing and tempering with sin, as if there were no evil nor danger in it. But if that we be wise, let us fly sin above all other evils whatsoever ; and in so doing, if we fly this evil of sin, we shall prevent many other judgments and evils, which are the fruits of sin.

[*In thy sight, or before thine eyes.*] As if David should have said, O Lord my God, though

I.

2.

3.

Use I.

Do^rt. 6.
Men sin
before
God.

Ps. 139.
Heb. 4. 13

Vse 2.

though I did commit adultery never so closely, and caused Uriah secretly to be slain; yet alas, I see all I did was manifest before thine eyes, and could not be hidden from thy sight.

Howsoever men and women sin never so closely and secretly, yet they sin before the face of the Lord, even in his eye, and under his nose, the Lord standing by and looking upon them. Neither distance of place, nor secret corner, neither darkness of the night, nor any device and shift of man whatsoever, is able to cover our sins from God's eyes; there is no creature which is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open before his eyes with whom we have to do. It is true indeed, it is an easie matter to blear the eyes of man, to sin so closely and secretly, that no man shall know it; in some dark night, for to steal, lye, commit adultery; but although all men and Angels be ignorant, yet our most secret and private sins are all naked unto the Almighty's eyes.

Oh that all men could be perswaded of this Doctrine, that we ever sin in the Lord's sight; when we lye, as Ananias did; or steal, with Achab; commit adultery, with David, that the Lord doth see us, and his fiery eyes behold us, and the Lord even then stands at our elbows, and looks upon us. Joseph no sooner became a Courtier, but presently he learns to swear by the life of Pharaoh: How should this be but a blessed means to bridle men, and to restrain them from many secret and hidden sins? What man durst be

be so bold and desperate to cut a purse when he sees the Judges eyes set on him, and beholding him? And what man is so desperate, that durst steal, lye, commit adultery, if he know that the all-seeing and piercing eye of this great God doth behold him, and look upon him? This doth the Lord God tell the seven Churches of *Asia*, in every Epistle, *I know thy works*: Oh then let the remembrance of this make us watchful and wary, to look unto our ways, to live as ever in God's presence.

Rev. 2.

Here is matter of comfort and encouragement unto the children of God; for as the Lord sees and beholdeth all the evils and sins of men and women, to judg and to punish them; all is naked to his piercing and all-seeing eyes: So likewise all our good deeds and virtues are known and seen of God; *I know thy works*; all thou dost, both good and bad, I know all. Now then, the Lord doth take knowledg of all our works, and sees them; yea, there is nothing we do, but it is manifest in his eyes: We know he is a bountiful God, and plenteously rewards all that love and fear him; yea, he will not leave a cup of cold water without a reward. O then, let us proceed and abound in good works, in knowledg, faith, repentence, patience, obedience, humility, zeal, love, &c. for the Lord knows, and sees all, and will not let any one good work go unrewarded.

Vſe. 2.

Now follows the second part of the Verse, containing a reason why the Prophet *David* did

did thus acknowledg and confess his sins, and humbled himself for them ; namely, that by this means he might clear the Lord of all injustice, and hard dealing in word or deed : As if he should have said, O Lord, I confess, that seeing I have so grievously sinned against thee, there is no cause why I should so much as accuse thee of the least cruelty, injustice, or hard dealing with me, either in the terrible threatenings by thy servant *Nathan*, or thy righteous judgment in taking away the child conceived in Adultery ; for I acknowledg that I have deserved far more grievous plagues and punishments for this my vile and grievous sin. And therefore, by this my confession, I do clear thee, O Lord, of all injustice and cruel dealing, and condemn my self to be worthy of far more grievous judgments and punishments for my sins, as all the world may see, and know, that thou art most just in all thy threatenings denounced against sin ; and most pure, and righteous in all thy judgments and fatherly chastisements.

That thou maist be just.

That is, that thou maist be known just in thy Works; and all the world may see and know, that there is great and just cause of thy threatenings against sin, and sinners. Now, what these speeches were, and the judgments threatned against *David*, look in the 2 Book of *Samuel*, ch. 12. v. 10. First, that the Sword should never depart from his

his house, but one Son should kill another. Secondly, that, the child conceived in adultery should die. Thirdly, that his own Son should rebell against him. And lastly, that his Wives should be abused, as he had abused another mans.

Hence mark, what use the Lord will make even of an accusing and guilty conscience. Namely, it shall not only be the Accuser, Witness, and Judg, to accuse and condemn it self, but shall clear the Lord of all injustice and hard dealing, making way unto the Lord's righteous judgment. This we may clearly behold in *Judas*, Mat. ch. 27. who readeth his own sentence of condemnation against himself, saying, *I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood.* And for this purpose, the Lord hath put into the soul of every man, not only a knowldg, whereby we can discern betwixt that which is lawful and good, from that which is evil, so far as shall leave all men without excuse: But also, that conscience can make application of that knowldg in all the actions of a man's life, a approving that which is good, and therein conceiveth matter of joy and comfort; or else condemning him for that which is evil, which will cause a fearful horrour in soul, as we see in *Cain*, Gen. 4. trembling in body, as in *Felix*, Act. 24. 26. or else fearful dreams and visions, as in *Belshazzar*, Dan. 5. And this we may clearly behold in *David*, the force of whose conscience was such, as that it sought no starting holes to hide it self; but saith, *Against thee, against thee*

Do^t. 7.
The Lord
maketh
good use
of our
consci-
ence.

thee only have I sinned, &c. And withal doth clear the Lord of all injustice, and hard dealing towards him, if he should bring upon him and his house all those fearful judgments which by *Nathan*, the Lord's Prophet, he had threatened against him, 2 Sam. 12. Indeed sin and sorrow are two things, like *Jacob* and *Esau*, one follows on the neck of another: And therefore let *Nathan's* information of God's judgments against *David*, work our reformation; for by our confession, (as *David* did) we pacifie God's wrath, and divert his judgments from us.

Use. I.

From this we learn, what an intollerable torment a wicked conscience is, even a Gibbet, and a Rack to wound a man withal, and as a feareful hue and cry every where overtaking him, giving a man no rest neither night nor day, but every where, and in all places, is ever dragging him before the Judg. No sooner did *Paul* dispute of Justice, Temperance, and Judgment to come, but *Felix*, trembled, Act. 24. No sooner had *Cain* slain his righteous brother *Abel*, but his guilty conscience made his countenance to fall, Gen. 4. What marvel is it then, if the wicked should stifle and hinder the checks of their consciences, being so fearful and terrible? But this they cannot do. Which being so, Oh! in the fear of God, let every one take heed of sin, for the motions thereof may well be compared to those Locusts of the bottomless pit, Rev. 9. having faces like men, and their hair like the hair of a woman; but a tail like a Scorpion, which stingeth

stingeth to death, Oh ! full little doth many a poor soul think, that That sin which now seemeth to be as light as a feather, should lye so heavy upon his soul in the end.

This teacheth us moreover to be very careful, that we neglect not the checks of conscience, nor our own hearts reproving us of our ways ; for time cometh apace, and thou knowest not how soon that Conscience of thine, which now doth check thee shall then judg thee ; and that heart of thine, which now doth reprove thee, shall then torment thee : And thou by it shalt be accused and convicted, that thou hast been a wilful chooser of thine own destruction.

Use. 2.

Again, in that the Prophet doth acknowledg, that if the Lord should bring upon him all those just judgments which he before had threatned by the Prophet *Nathan*, namely, *1 Sam. 12. That the Sword should never depart from his house, that the child conceived in Adultery should dye, that his Sons should deflower his Wives, &c.* yet for all that, that God were most just in his judgments ; We learn a second point of Doctrine, that howsoever the Lord reproveth us for sin, and seems to threaten and thunder out judgments, as he did against *Pharaoh*, yet we are to confess that God is just and righteous in his threatenings ; that he deals not more severely with us than our sins do deserve: This *David* did ; though he was a King, yet having sinned, and committed evil in God's sight, when *Nathan* came, and took him up

Doct. 2.
God is e-
ver just in
his judg-
ments.

soundly for his sins, he acknowledged God dealt justly with him, though he rebuked him sharply and soundly : So must we know it is our duty, that when we are reproved for our sins, we judg and imagine, it is no more than we have deserved. Old Ely, when Samuel told him, that God would destroy his Sons, and take the high Priests office from him, because he did not rule and govern his children, and correct them; he answered, *It is the Lord, let him do as it seemeth good in his eyes,* 1 Sam. 3. 18. David did swim in a Jordan of sweet waters, a great while, as he thought, but at length he came to the troubled waters of Marah, even sorrow and tears, for his sins past ; and by this true contrition, and hearty sorrow of unfeigned tears, he quenched God's wrath which was denounced against him ; and for one ounce of pleasure which he had, and enjoyed, he had a pound of sorrow ; for he wept, and watered his couch with his tears.

In like sort, Mat. 15. the Canaanitish woman, though she were called a Dog by our Saviour, yet she justified him in his saying, *Truth, Lord, I am as thou hast said;* but yet admit I be a Dog, then give me that which Dogs oftentimes have, even a crumb of thy mercy. Thus did Hereziah, 2 King. 29. when the Prophet had threatened him because of his pride, in shewing his treasures, he confesseth that God was just, and might have dealt yet more rigorously with him, saying, *The word of the Lord is good.* These examples do shew, what is the nature of true
pe-

penitents; namely, to acknowledg that which from God's Word is most severely and sharply spoken, to be just and true. Whereas on the contrary, we shall see Hypocrites ready to censure God, to deal too severely with them, as we may read, Luk 13. how that the wicked, at the last, will seem to plead their case with God, saying, *Lord, hast thou not preached in our streets, and have we not eat and drank in thy company?* Seeming thereby, to have such an interest in Christ, as that he should deal unjustly with them to condemn them. The like we may see in Cain, Gen. 4. *My sin, saith he, that is, my punishment, is greater than I can bear.* So that we see, that as the righteous man acknowledgeth God to be just in all things, so the wicked man dares charge God to his face, that he is unjust, if he punish sin severely.

This sheweth, of what spirit those men be of, who, when they be sharply reproved for their sins, as swearing, drunkenness, whoredom, covetousness, &c. they begin to murmur and grudg, to find fault with the Ministers^{of} God, that they be too hot, and too earnest, too sharp and severe; they would be more mildly dealt withal: They cannot abide these hot fellows, that be all of the Spirit, they would be handled nicely and gently. But we see, David, a King, acknowledgeth God to be just, and to deal justly with him. But these men are like unto Abrah^m, he hated Michajah; and why? because he never prophesied good unto him,

Pſ. 50. 5.

Iſa. 58. 1.

Mat. 6. 10.

Pſal. 141.

Use 2.
Faithful
Ministers a
oken of
God's
love.

but ever told him of God's judgments ; and therefore he could not away with him : But let us know, that it is a bad property, and a sign of a most lewd and graceless heart, *Thou hateſt to be reformed.* The vileſt Atheiſt in the World, will be content to hear the Goſpel ; but let us know, that we must be content to hear of God's judgments. *Herod* could be content to hear *John Baptist* gladly, until he came for to touch his hainous ſin, which was a ſign he had a naughty heart. But *David* could wiſh the righteous might ſmife him friendly, and reprove him : for ſuch ſmiting ſhould be good for him.

Let us learn by *David's example*, quiet- ly and patiently to hear of our ſins, and to hear God's judgments denounced againſt them : And let us deem it a ſingular favour of God, if the Lord ſend ſome godly *Nathan* to tell us of our ſins, and to thunder out God's judgments againſt them ; it is a ſign the Lord loveth us, and would not have us to perish. And therefore let us be ſo far from murmurung, or diſliking the Lord's Mi- niſters, for telling us of our ſins, that we ſhould rather love them, and like them : Yea, *David* loved *Nathan* above all other men, because that he was a means to reclaim him, and bring him home again by true re- pentance. And ſo it is with all God's chil- dren, that thoſe faithful Miſters of the World, which have been the means to hum- ble them, and caſt them down from their ſins, of all other they love them, and make much

much of them. *David* did not put off his repentance, or delay it, saying, I will hear of it some other time, as King *Agrippa* did ; no, he knew by God's grace, that the present occasion was the fittest opportunity for a sinner to repent, not to put it off till the morrow ; for we have no time which we can call our own, but this minute, this present time : For who knoweth, whether he shall see the next Sun rising, yea or no ?

Psal. 142

Seeing, when *Nathan* reproved *David*, he acknowledgeth it to be the Lord's rebuking of him ; it must admonish all men to listen unto the word of God in the mouth of his Ministers, as though the Lord himself should speak unto them ; for they stand in his stead, and whatsoever they speak in the name of the Lord, it is as much as if the Lord himself should speak from Heaven : And therefore Christ saith, *He that heareth you, heareth me ; And he that despiseth you, despiseth me ; And he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* And therefore, let us take to heart the judgments God threateneth by his Ministers. Let us make a good use of them ; and let us assure our selves, that unless we do repent, they will seize upon us : and therefore let all ungodly men take heed how they revile God's faithful Ministers when they will deal soundly and roundly, sincerely and sharply with them for sin : Thou strivest not with man, but with God.

Use 3.
God
speaketh
by his Mi-
nisters.

Luk. 16.

And pure when thou judgest.

THAT is, that thou maist be known to be pure, and free from all cruelty and injustice in thy judgments ; when thou dost chaste man for sin. We must needs acknowledg that thou art just, and dost never deal so hardly with us as we deserve.

For himself he confesseth, that God, is most just : That howsoever the Lord might bring upon him all those heavy judgments which he had threatened by his holy Prophet against him, *viz.* That evil should be raised against him out of his own house. That the sword should be sent against it. That his wives should be openly defiled. That the child, born in adultery, should dye. Yet, although all those things should come upon him and his house, the Lord should still be free from cruelty and injustice.

Vñ 1.

Dan. 9. 5,
6, 7.

By this example of David we may learn to free the Lord from all cruel, hard, and unjust dealing : That although the Lord bring upon us many and grievous judgments, sickness, poverty, imprisonment, plague, famine, sword, pestilence, &c, yet let us take it so to heart, that ever we do acknowledg God is free from all cruel and unjust dealing. A most lively example of this we have in the people of the Jews, whom the Lord had grievously afflicted for the contempt of his Word, and despising the Prophet, sent them into great captivity : Now being there, they do not complain of any unjust dealing of God

God towards them; but confess farther, That it was of his endless mercy that they were not consumed, because his compassions fail not. The like example we have in Job, who never charged God of any unjust dealing. And to the same purpose speaks the Church, Mic. 7. 9. I will bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.

Hence we are taught, whatsoever cross or judgment the Lord shall lay upon us, to undergo the same without murmuring or repining against God; for in all these things God is most righteous, and layeth nothing on us, which we have not deserved. Let us therefore learn, with David, to be dumb and silent under the hand of God, whatsoever we suffer, because God hath done it, and we have deserved it. But alas, how far is this from those men, who, when they are crossed, are ready to break into cursing and swearing, &c. or at least fret, and repine against God, as if he had done them wrong in punishing them.

This condemns that great impatience of many a one, that, when the Lord doth exercise them by sickness, by poverty, by crosses in wife or children, &c. are ready to murmur and complain, that the Lord dealeth hardly with them, so that they dare reason and dispute with God. This was Job's case in his extremity, he forgot himself, and spake foolishly. Nay, rather let us, with David, confess and acknowledg, that it is the just hand of God, and that he doth us no wrong, although he send many and

Lam. 3. 22.

Job. 1. 22.

Vit. 1.

Vit. 2.

Job 13. 15.
Dan. 9.

long afflictions upon us: Let us confess, it is his mercy that he sends no more; yea, let us acknowledg, that we are worthy ten thousand times to perish for our sins, and to be damned eternally. And if the Lord should for evermore condemn us, yet he should be just.

Use 3.

Note.

Use 4.

This condemns all those proud spirits, who dare charge the Lord of great cruelty and hardness if he should reject the greatest part of Mankind, and damn them for their sins; they think it stands not with God's mercy so to do; but, as the Apostle *Paul*, in the eleventh Chapter to the *Romans*, saith, *What art thou, O man, that darest dispute with God?* Yea, it is therefore just because God willeth it; for his Will is the rule of Justice: And therefore any thing is just, because he wills it; and therefore let us not only in our own particular crosses and calamities, acknowledg God to be just, but also in the matter of reprobation, and rejection, let us acknowledg Almighty God to be most just and righteous: *Let God be true, and every man a liar.*

Seeing the Lord is pure and just, free from all cruel and hard dealing, in word or deed; let us labour to be like unto him; let us labour to be like unto him; let us be just in our word, and just in our deed, shun all unjust, cruel and merciless dealing to our brethren; take heed of lying, deceiving, and unjust and cruel dealing in buying and selling. Let us imitate God our heavenly Father; *be ye holy as he is holy;* just, righteous, pure, as he is pure: For if we shall be either unjust,

unjust, unrighteous, impure, given to cruelty, hard, and merciless dealing, we shall be most unlike to God, and be most like the Devil, who is a liar, and the father of lies; a murderer, and a cruel blood-shedder from the beginning.

VERSE V.

Behold I was born in iniquity, and in sin bath my mother conceived me.

IN this Verse, and the next that followeth, the Prophet amplifieth the confession of his sins. First, from the original and fountain of the same : Namely, his natural sin, wherein he was conceived and born. Secondly, from the most holy and pure Nature, in which God hath created him; against which he sets his own corrupt and defiled Nature. Thirdly, by that knowledg whereby the Lord had indued him, because God had poured into his heart, and made known unto him his Will by his Word, more then to many others; and made him capable of the heavenly, and saving Knowledg of his Will.

David confesseth his original sin, as the fountain of all sins.

THIS word doth not always note some strange thing, but likewise sometimes pointeth out some special thing worthy to be marked, and, that ought to be learned of all men:

The meaning of the Word.

men : For I have observed it to be repeated in the Sacred Scriptures, at the least two hundred several times from the Alpha of Genesis, to the Omega of the Revelations. Behold, it is a word of comfort, and imports much good to the hearers ; it is like a Beacon set on upon a Hill, that gives warning when it is kindled, to all that behold it, to look about them : It is a word of consolation ; for the Angels said, Behold, fear not, for I bring you glad tidings of peace : Behold, this is a day of great joy to all people.

I was born in iniquity.

AS if he should have said ; O Lord, I confess, that I was not only defiled with sin, when I committed that foul sin of Adultery, but even so soon as ever I came into the World, and saw the light of the Sun, I was polluted with sin from the top to the toe.

And in sin bath my Mother conceived me.

THAT is, not only when I first came into the world, but even so soon as I was inclosed, and conceived in my Mother's womb, even then I was stained, both in soul and body, with sin : So that the Prophet David speaketh here of that Original sin wherein he was both bred and born, and wherein he was defiled both in soul and body : And this original sin, it was the root and spawn of his other sins.

pointed out in the word of God.
Bold.

His word sheweth, that this Doctrine of Original sin is a point necessary to be known and learned of Men, and such a point as none should be ignorant of; because a man can never thoroughly know his own misery, till he come to know even his Original sin, wherein he was both bred and born; to know, that by Nature, even so soon as we are born, yea, conceived in the womb, we be but a lump and mass of sin, and by nature the children of wrath, by the disobedience of our first Parents, Adam and Eve.

And this is true of all, (without exception) high and low, rich and poor, noble or simple; for thus doth David confess himself, *I was born in iniquity, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.* If in sin; then in God's wrath, and in danger of eternal condemnation. If any ask, how can this be? I answer, Every man is guilty of Adam's great sin, and also tainted originally with all corruption, with a proneness unto all iniquity. Therefore it followeth, in equity and justice, that every man is born under the wrath and curse of God.

And yet consider, how few observe this point of Doctrine concerning Original sin, not one of a hundred. O then, let us labour to see in what a blessed estate we were at first created; and withal, how we be defiled and stained by the fall of Adam, and now by nature.

The necessity of this doctrine of original sin.

Eph. 2. 2.

Gen. 8. 12.
Job 41. 4
Joh. 3. 6.

ture are but a very lump of sin and pollution, that so we may labour to recover that former estate again, by Water, and the Spirit, which is the Regeneration.

Doct. I.
What
need we
have to
look into
our nature.

Ephes. 2.
Joh. 3. 6.

Seeing *David* thus repented of his actual sin of adultery and murder, doth come to find out the root and ground of it, his Original sin, and corruption of nature : We learn, That a man doth never truly repent of any one crime, unless withal he come to find out other sins whereof he is guilty ; yea, till he can descend to the very fountain and mother sin : Namely, corruption of nature, and original sin ; that is, that pollution of soul and body, wherein we are bred and born. For here, *David* doth not speak of some one or two sins, but now he confesseth, that he is even a mass of corruption, and a lump of all uncleanness, and from top to toe is defiled with sin. Even so no man doth truly repent till he can acknowledg that he is born in sin ; yea, as it were a lump and mass of all uncleanness ; and every particular sin we fall into, should put us in mind of this natural pollution ; that we are nothing else but a very lump of sin, and that by nature there is in us nothing that good is, but sin and corruption.

And as it was in *David*, when he repented of his adultery, he comes to other sins, even to the root and spawn of all : So it is in every true repentant sinner; he that is wounded for one sin, and repents of that truly, he repents of all, he is humbled for all his sins, and in the end comes, with *David*, to see that he is but

but a lump of sin, and mass of all pollution : and indeed a true conversion of a sinner must begin in the heart, as it did with *David* : It was not forced from *David* to confess his sins for a forced confession is not so good, to leave sin when we cannot commit it longer ; no, *David* said, *Behold I was born in sin.*

Then *David* doth confess here, that he was even conceived in sin ; that is, so soon as ever he was inclosed in his mother's womb, he was polluted with sin and natural corruption ; We see, that no man by nature is born the child of God, but by nature we are all the children of wrath ; yea, we are by nature a lump of sin, a mass of all uncleanness and corruption : Our minds are full of blindness, our will of disobedience, and our affections full of naughtiness and untowardness ; yea, by original sin we are guilty of the wrath of God, and in danger of hell and damnation, worthy to perish for ever.

Yes, by nature there is no difference between the Elect and the Reprobate neither in outward or in inward disposition, until God make it by grace. *Paul*, as bloody a persecutor as ever, was *Domitian*, or *Julian*; *Zacheus*, as unconscionable and covetous a Worldling, as was that rich Glutton, damned in Hell, *Luke 16.* and *Luke 19.* All men are alike by nature, before that grace makes a difference.

Seeing all men by nature are the children of wrath, and heirs of God's vengeance, in danger to be damned, and worthy to perish eternally in Hell fire for ever : Then he that dyeth

Doct. 5.
By nature
no man is
born the
child of
God.

Ep. 1. 23.
Gen. 8. 21.
Joh. 3. 6.
Joh. 10.
Gen. 5. 3.

Use 1.

Joh. 3.

Luk. 13. 5.

dyeth in the state of nature, cannot be saved, and come to Life eternal; but living and dying a natural man, must needs be damned and dye eternally. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Again, Except ye repent, ye shall all perish. And therefore so long as we continue in the state of nature, being conceived and born in sin, we are in a most miserable and desperate estate.

For the poyson of our nature is the same in us, that it is in the wicked, and by nature we are prone to all manner of sin: And howsoever, by the special mercy of God, we have escaped many horrible and grievous sins which we find that the wicked oft have fallen into; it is not, for that we are of a purer nature than they; (for it is a like with the Reprobate) but because the poysoned corruption thereof hath not yet discovered it self in us, which we have just cause every day to fear.

Oh then, let us labour to get out of this cursed state of nature, and get into the state of grace, to be born anew, to become new Creatures in Christ Jesus; to repent, to seek to Jesus Christ for mercy; for if we live and dye in the state of Nature, it is impossible we should be saved: And therefore, the estate of all carnal men and women, which are merely natural, howsoever civil, and honest, are in a fearful estate and condition; for all this while they do nothing but sin: All the Actions of a natural man be so many sins unto him; as Prayer, hearing the Word, receiving

Gen. 4.

ving the Sacraments, and the like; for before any of these sacrifices can be accepted of God, their persons must first be approved.

Seeing that all of us be conceived in sin, and stained with Original uncleanness, and therefore are not only subject to the curse of God, but even polluted in soul and body, blind in our minds, rebellious in our wills and affections: Then those men who stand upon their own wit, and wisdom, and care not for the word of God preached, shew that they be in a miserable case: All the knowledg, wit, and strength of Nature, cannot bring a man to Heaven, and to Life eternal: And the reason is, The natural man perceiveth not the things that are of God. Again, when as the world could not know God in the wisdom of God, it pleased God by the foolishnes of Preaching to save them that believe: And therefore, let us renounce our selves, our natural wisdom, strength, and goodness, and become fools in our selves, that we may be wise in God: abhor our selves, and our own goodness, and labour to be found righteous in Christ's Righteousness. Paul confesseth, saying, *in me there dwelleth no good thing*;—we cannot think a good thought, much less do any good, till we be illuminated by the Word and Spirit, enlightened and sanctified.

Then we may perceive, that the Doctrine of the Papists, that man hath natural free-will, and by virtue of that can do some good to please God, and can keep the Law, and merit

vñ 2.

I Cor. 1.

10.

I Cor. 3.

Rom. 8. 8.

Gen. 8. 11.

Rom. 7. 7.

vñ 3.

merit Life eternal, that is most false ; for all men be conceived in iniquity, stark dead in transgressions, have no power to do good things, but are prone to all evil and corruption : For a man hath no freewill in any thing that is good, and leadeth to Life eternal, but all to evil.

And in sin hath my mother conceived me.

Herein we may note the greatness of *Adam's fall*, and the sin of our first Parents, who did not only bring the curse of God upon themselves, but upon all their posterity ; and did not only defile themselves, but all that should come of them. For *Adam* did not fall as a private man, but as the main root and stock of all mankind : and we all fell in him, because we were all in his loins. And therefore, seeing such is the greatness of *Adam's fall*, we ought to be humbled for it, and daily to bewail it ; because if he had not transgressed, then we should not have been conceived in sin, nor lost the image of God, wherein we were at first created in holyness and righteousness ; And withal we must labour to be renewed daily, and to have the image of Almighty God restored, by dying to sin, and living to righteousness ; that we may be holy as God is holy, and righteous as God is righteous. God is unchangeable, and yet our sins can change him ; yea, from being our friend, to be our enemy. Man, by the power of sin, can turn good into evil, and light into darkness ;

ness ; and man falling into sin, doth cast himself into the pit of destruction. Let us take notice, that punishments are proportioned and provided for men, according to the measure of grace which was given them by God at first.

We see, that our natural Parents, though they be holy, and such as believe, yet they beget children in sin and uncleanness, and do convey original sin unto their children; they do warm them with unclean blood, and so by that means do make them children of wrath, and heirs of God's anger, and in the state of damnation. For believing Parents beget not believing children, but children like unto themselves, as they be sinful men and women : *Adam begat a child in his own likeness;* that is, a sinful man like unto himself.

Now we know that God's Image was defaced in *Adam*, he begat a Son, therefore corrupt, according to his own corrupt Image ; as *Job speaketh, Job. 14. Who can bring a clean thing out of that which is unclean ?* And this is the reason, *Gen. 4. 3. That the corrupt nature of Cain led him to that, for the which he had no example,* And this is true of all men else, though they might never see any thing that were evil, yet of themselves, and of their own dispositions they would do evil, being, by nature, men haled thereunto.

Well, seeing Parents now, by the fall of *Adam*, get sinful children, and they be bred and born in sin, and they be the means to beget them, and to bring them into the World,

*Doct. 7.
Godly Parents be-
get sinful
children.*

Gen. 1. 3.

*Vie 3.
Parents
duty.*

Note.

World, and to convey Original sin unto them, and make them in a fearful and damnable estate : O how should Parents labour to bring them out of the state of nature and damnation, into grace and salvation ? If thou shouldst do any thing to bring thy child into danger of death, how would it grieve thee, that thou by thy folly shouldst bring thy child to untimely death ! How much more to bring them in danger of eternal Death ? And therefore, pity thy poor child, seek to make him the child of God ; repent thy self, pray for him, admonish him, bring him to hear the Word, and publick means ; call upon him to repent, to beg the pardon of his sin, to fear God ; give him good example, lest for want of this, thou dost thrust his poor soul into Hell : Oh how can Parents be too careful for their children, seeing they have been the means to bring them into this woful estate !

Use 2.

Seeing that *David* doth acknowledg his natural sin and corruption, to this end, even to aggravate the grievousness of his sin, and not to lessen it, or excuse himself, but rather to confess, that he was nothing else but a mass of sin, and all pollution : This shews of what spirit those prophane beasts be, who, being told of their filthy sins, of adultery, whoredom and uncleanness, by and by they answer, Why, what should we do ? we are but flesh and blood, and we see it is in our nature to sin, and so think by one sin to excuse another, and by one debt to pay another. Tell men of their unbridled and

and unruly affection, covetousness, anger, &c. and what is their answer? It is their nature to do so; which is all one, as to go about to pay one debt with another: And thus they go about to hide their sins. We see, David sought no such starting holes, but rather confesseth he is a mass of sin, and that he is every way worthy to perish for his sin, and in danger to be damned: And therefore, let us take heed that we do not so confess our natural corruption, as to make it a boulster to uphold us in our sins; but rather to be humbled for it, that our nature is so miserably polluted, and labour to have it reformed.

And last of all, this may serve to reprove the extreme folly of those that stand so much upon their pedigree, as though they were not made of common mould, but even from the consideration of the greatness of their Parentage bear themselves aloof, thinking none their equal; as though true Nobility stood in this that man descends of man.

But let not such stand so much upon the honour and greatness of their birth, or the antiquity of their Predecessors, as though in these things alone they were happy. But let them labour withal, to be the Sons of God by regeneration: This is indeed the ornament of blood, and the finest flower in their Garland. And though a man be never so noble, or great in Estate; yet if he be not a repentant sinner, and such a one that is truly humbled before God, he is most base and vile, and his Nobility stinks in the Nostrils of God.

Vſe. 3.

Vſe. 4.

VERSE

VERSE VI.

*Behold thou lovest truth in the inward affection,
therefore hast thou taught me wisdom in the
secret of my heart.*

David, in the former Verse, had set out the grievousness of his sin, and by this that he was even conceived in sin, and even from the cradle was worthy to perish, and to be damned. In this sixth Verse the Prophet David proceeds to set out the grievousness of his sin by another argument, taken from the most pure nature of Almighty God; who being most just and holy, and most pure, can delight in nothing but in that which is pure and holy : But he confesseth, that by his sins he had defiled himself both in soul and body, so as he was not worthy to appear in the presence of Almighty God.

Behold.

The meaning of the words.

AS if he should have said, O Lord my God, thou art a most holy, and most just God, and canst abide no unclean thing. But I, even David, once a creature after thine own heart, sanctified by thy holy Spirit, have spoiled all, and with filthy uncleanness and adultery, as also murder, and shedding of guiltless blood, have defiled and stained my self, both in body and soul : So as I am now clean out of order, and so foul, that I am not worthy to come into thy presence ;

sence; so as instead of that inward purity and sincerity, and that uprightness both in soul and body, I have brought out most ugly and cursed fruits of sin and uncleanness. Thus doth he still lay open his misery, and aggravate his sin before the Lord.

Seeing that David doth aggravate his sin by weighing the most pure and holy nature of God, that can abide no inquiry, or uncleanness; From hence we learn, that a man or woman shall never sufficiently enough see themselves, and their own misery, till such time as they do look up unto the most holy and pure nature of God. All the while we measure our selves by our selves, look upon our own goodness, wisdom, knowledg, uprightness, we think highly of our selves; but if we once lift up our eyes to the most holy and most pure nature of God, and withal consider how we are swerved from it, and are defiled with sin; O then we begin to pull down our Peacocks feathers, and to humble our selves in the sight of God. Job had a long time stood upon his own goodness and virtues, but after the Lord opened his eyes, to see the most pure and holy Nature of God, and his own vileness, he cried out, *O Lord, thou, I know, canst do all things; no thought is hid from thee: I have spoken things I know not. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: Therefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.* Paul saith of himself, *Before the Commandement came, I was alive,* Rom. 7. A jolly fellow, thought well of

Doct. 1.
True
knowledg
of God
worketh
true humili-
lity.

Job 42.
1, 2.

*Josh. 13.
10.*

Use I.—

Luk. 18. 2.

Gen. 17.

of himself; but when the Commandement came, and he had got the knowldg of God, namely, that he was a holy and just God, then he was dead. The people of *israel* thought it an easie matter to serve the Lord, and were very forward, but *Joshua* adviseth them to take heed, for saith he, *The Lord is a holy God, a jealous God, and will not pardon your sins, and iniquities.* So that by all these it appeareth, that the knowldg of God, as he is a holy, pure, and righteous God, is a special means to humble us, and to make us know our selves, and our misery; and therefore doth the Prophet *David* prefix before it this note of attention, *Behold,* mark, consider it well.

What is the reason, that sinful and miserable men dare be so bold to stand upon their own goodness and worthines, when they come into God's presence, like the proud *Pharisee?* because they do not consider with whom they have to deal, with God who is most pure, and loveth purity, and can abide no impurity. Oh if men would look up unto the holy and most pure nature of God, it would be a special means to humble them, and to pluck down their pride; Then they would see and acknowledg that they are but dust and ashes, as *Abraham*, pleading with God, confesseth and humbles himself: Then they would come with more reverence and fear, and confess themselves vile and miserable creatures. O then let us think upon this, with *David, Job, Abraham*, when we come into God's presence, to humble us, that

that we may come with great preparation, and look unto our feet and affections, that we may remember we come not into the presence of an earthly King, but of the ever living God; as that we thereby be brought not to conceive too well of our selves, as many men do in these days.

Thou lovest truth in the inward affection.

Hence mark, that a sound, upright, and sincere heart, is that the Lord loveth well, and taketh delight in, and without this all that we do is loathsome, and abominable. This honest and good heart our Saviour Christ commendeth in *Nathanael*; Behold, a true Israelite, in whom is no guile: This true Israelite, this upright heart, the Lord loveth it, and the Lord delighteth in it: And the good ground are those which with an honest and good heart, hear the Word, and bring forth fruit with patience.

This serveth to cut the comb of all hypocrites and dissemblers, who think God will be pleased with outward shews and colours, although they be rotten at the Core, like Apples of Sodom: The Lord sheweth his dislike of these naughty and dissembling wretches: *This people come near me with their lips, and honour me with their mouths, but their hearts are far from me: So the Lord telleth the Jews; You did but dissemble with him in your hearts, when you sent me unto the Lord to pray for you, and that you would do his will, and his word, but now you will do nothing,*

Luk.8. 15

Use I.

Jer.52.20.

Act. 5.

Ver. 2.

thing, but clean contrary, even after your own lusts. And amongst us in these days, there are many hypocrites and dissemblers, painted tombs, gay without, making fair shews, and goodly colours, but their hearts are rotten to the core; they are but counterfeit Christians, and God abhorreth them, and hath no liking of them: For as he loveth truth and soundness of heart, so he hateth and abhorreth all hypocrisy. Let all such look upon the fearful hand of the Lord on *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, who, because they would seem to be religious, and somewhat forward to sell their Lands, and give to the poor; because their hearts were not sound, and upright, but they dissembled; therefore the Lord smote them both dead. And to shew how the Lord hateth hypocrites, and dissemblers, Christ, in the 24. of Matthew, and v. 51. saith, *All vile sinners shall have their portion with Hypocrites*; because, of all men, hypocrites shall have the greatest measure of torment and condemnation.

Seeing that the Lord loveth and delighteth in truth, and sincerity of the mind, and affection, let us be careful all our days to get a sound and upright heart, void of all hypocrisy and dissimulation, so as in all things we find our hearts sound and sincere, in all our duties in the worship of God, in speaking, hearing, praying; yea, in all things. Now this uprightness and soundness of the heart will appear, as by many other things, so by this, when a man is as careful to please God, and to shun sin in private as in publick,

lick, in secret as abroad, and making conscience of sin, although no man nor Angel could accuse him of it ; then it is a sign his heart is sound and upright. But if thou find, that in secret thou darest commit those sins which thou wouldest be loath to commit abroad in the sight and view of others ; it is a sign, thy heart is not upright with God. Oh then, let us labour to get this honest and good heart, this soundness and sincerity of affections ; that is, *Truth in the inward affections*, which will bring peace unto our souls, and make all we do acceptable, when our heart is purified by faith. When the Lord describes a blessed man, he shews who it is, *Even in whose spirit there is no guile*. And whatsoever a man doth, though never so excellent and glorious in the eyes of man, though a man could even speak with the tongue of men and Angels, and could pray never so excellently for words or matter ; yet if the heart be not sound, but hollow, and full of Hypocrisie, all is not worth a button ; whereas, if the heart be sincere and sound, purified by faith in Christ Jesus, though men have many wants and weaknesses, the Lord God regardeth the uprightness and truth of the heart.

Last of all, observe hence what a singular favour and grace of God it is, when we have sound and sanctified hearts, sincere and upright with God, void of hypocrisie and dissimulation. It is that the Lord so highly esteems of, that he wisheth most earnestly for it, *Deut. 5. 2. 9. Oh that there were thus*

Act. I. 5. 9.

Psal. 3. 2.

Doct. 2.
A sanctified heart a great blessing of God.

heart in them. And the Prophet David saith here, that the Lord doth love truth in the inward affection : and again, Prov. XI. 28. They that be of a froward heart, are abominable to the Lord; but they that be upright in heart are his delight. This upright heart is in none but those that be truly regenerate, which have truly repented of their faults, and believe in Christ Jesus, Act. 15. 9. Because faith alone doth purifie the heart ; and therefore, those that do not believe and repent, cannot have this pure heart ; and it is such an heart as hath no purpose to live in any known sin whatsoever, but a desire and careful endeavour to perform obedience to every one of the Commandments.

Well, seeing the Lord God doth so highly commend an honest heart, and so earnestly desireth and wisheth it : Oh how should we labour for it, to have a sound heart, purified by faith in Christ Jesus, to carry no purpose to sin in any thing, but in all things to please him, and to do his will ; and therefore, again, I say, let us look to our hearts, that they be found, and that, as we profess our selves to be Christians in shew, so we may approve our selves Christians in the sight of God : That he may approve of us, in that we have sound hearts to walk with our God, and a purpose in all things to do his Will. Job. I. 14. It is no small commendation that Christ gives to Nathanael, that he was a true Israelite, in whom was no guile. And nothing indeed doth more distinguish a true Christi-

Christian from a counterfeit, than this truth and sincerity of heart. *Esau*, Gen. 27. can mourn-like *Hezekiah*; and *Ahab* can put on sack-cloath, 1 Reg. 21. and *Saul* as well as *David* can say, *I have sinned*. But their hearts were full of hypocrisy, far from sincerity before God.

Seeing God loveth truth in the inward affection, we learn, Where truth doth not reign, sin doth reign, which is but a lying vanity: And all those that have been in love with it, in the end have found the same to be true. *Achan*, through his covetous desire thought to enrich himself by the wedg of Gold, and the *Babylonish* garment which he had purloined, contrary to the Commandement of God, but it fell out to his own destruction. *Ahab* rose up, and took possession of *Naboth's Vineyard*, but withal, he purchased the wrath of God, the destruction of himself, and the ruine of his whole house. The like may be said of *Judas*, who, through his covetous desire was led to betray his Master; yet how he digested the same in the end, the Evangelist declareth; when he saw that Christ was condemned, he brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the high-priest, and Elders, saying, *I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood*. And this shall men one day be sure to find, that the perishing pleasures of sin shall have sorrow in the end. That, If they have not truth in the inward affection of the heart, there must needs reign sin; and sin is a lying vanity, and will deceive in the end.

Dost. 3.
Sin is but
a lying va-
nity.

Jos. 7. 25.

1 King. 21.

Mat. 27. 4.

Heb. 3.3.

Indeed all sin to a natural man is delightful, and pleasant, he findeth it sweet to his taste ; but it is as sweet meat that hath poison mingled with it : That howsoever it is sweet in the taste, yet in the end it bringeth death. So it is with sin, it doth delight in the committing thereof, but in the end threateneth the destruction of the whole man.

Wise 1.

Here then we may see the woful fruit of sin ; which natural men make their chiefest happiness and felicity. They may indeed delight for a time, and please the carnal desires of natural men : but oh, alas ! they bring an heavy account and reckoning in the end. So that we may say to all natural and carnal men, whose portion is in this life, as Abner said in another case ; *Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end ?* This we may see in Cain, Esau, in Ahab, Judas, &c. that having tasted of the bread of deceit, have had their mouths filled with gravel in the end. For the motions of sin are like those Locusts of the bottomless pit ; having faces like men, and their hair like the hair of a Woman, but a tail like a Scorpion, which stingeth to death.

2 Sam. 2.
26.

Prov. 9.

Wise 2.

Pro. 10. 9.

We learn hence, that it must be the Christian practice of a godly man ; Namely, to walk plainly and sincerely, to be a true Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile. This is that which Solomon teacheth : *He that walketh uprightly, walketh boldly ; but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.* Oh it is a gracious thing for a man in all things to labour to keep faith and a good conscience ; such

such a man may assure himself, that the Lord loveth him: *For he loveth truth in the inward afflictions:* But such as commit wickedness without care or conscience, shall be sure to feel the smart in the end.

Therefore hast thou taught me wisdom in the secret of my heart.

The Prophet David, in this last place, aggravateth his sin by that knowledge which God in mercy had bestowed upon him: Namely, that God had taught him heavenly wisdom by the law of God, whereby he knew very well what God required at his hands, and how he ought to serve and worship God; Nay, by his Spirit he had taught him wisdom in the secret of his heart, in a special manner revealing his will unto him, and therefore he confesseth, that his sin was the more hainous and grievous: For if he had never been sanctified, not truly called; if he had been ignorant and blind in the word of God, though it could not excuse him, yet his sin had not been so great; But seeing he who had made so good proceeding in the service and worship of God, who had taught others, who was so enlightened by the Spirit, and being taught in a special manner, against knowldg, against conscience, and so foully sinned against God; this highly increaseth and aggravateth his sin.

Hence then learn, that it is a fearful and very dangerous sin for any man or woman to

David's
sin hainous,
and why?

Because
God had
taught
him wis-
dom se-
cretly.

Doct. 4.
A fearful
thing to
sin against
knowldg.

sin against the known truth of the Word and Law of God, against knowledg and conscience, when as we have not only known the will and word of God, but believed it, been enlightned by the Spirit, and being taught of God in our inward affections, then against all these means to sin, and to commit iniquity against knowledg and conscience, it is a most dangerous thing; this may here appear in *David*, who was grievously wounded for this sin above all other, and felt the smart of it, to humble him all the days of his life, So Peter's denial of Christ, Luk. ch. 23. though it were for fear, yet being against knowledg and conscience, oh, it causeth him to weep bitterly. And indeed, sins of knowledg, and against conscience, are done with some presumption against God. And therefore, if ever a man be touched for them, they will wound him deep, and cause tears to follow.

Luk. 23.1.

Vs 1.

Seeing it is so fearful and dangerous to sin against knowledg and conscience, because thereby we do what lyeth in us to quench the Spirit, to wound our consciences, and it is a great step unto the sin against the holy Ghost Oh then, let us in the fear of God take heed we never give that liberty to our own lusts and liking, as to sin against knowledg and conscience. If the Devil tempis thee to any sin, which thou knowest is condemned in the word of God, as swearing, lying, stealing, murther, Adultery, &c. and thy conscience telleth thee of it, and checks thee for it, do not

nor commit it, though thou mightest gain a Kingdom by it. For that which followeth will be a far greater loss; for thou shalt lose peace of Conscience, and joy in the Spirit, feeling of God's love, and comfort in affliction; and if God be not merciful unto thee, thou shalt go on from sin to sin, to a reprobate sense. It is true, Ignorance shall excuse no man; yet sins of ignorance are far less than sins of knowledg, and against conscience: *Paul* persecuted the Church of God, but it was by ignorance, and therefore God shewed him mercy; but if thou of spite and malice shalt persecute, and against knowledg and the checks of thy conscience, hurt and injure the servants of God, and members of Christ, how canst thou ever look to find mercy? Thou knowest that God forbiddeth, and condemneth lying, swearing, stealing, murther, adultery, drunkennes, &c. And if thou shalt wittingly and willingly rush into them, though thou know they be forbidden, thou maist look for some fearful judgments of God upon thee: And therefore, if thou be tempted, answer, I will not yield; It is written, I may not steal, lye, commit adultery, &c. as Christ answered the Devil.

We see, that if God leave his children, they may fall dangerously into great errors, yea, against knowledg, and conscience, as *Abraham, Paul, Peter, &c.* For of our selves we have no power to resist the subtil temptations and assaults of the Devil; but even, as a staff stands so long as it is staid, but when it is left alone, presently it falls with the least

Mat. 4.

v. 2.

puff of wind ; so do we ; and therefore let us not rely too much upon our own power, as Peter did, and fell ; but fear our weakness, and suspect our selves, and pray the Lord to hold us to our selves, for else there is no sin so foul into which we will not easily plunge our selves.

And yet, if the Lord leave us to fall into some great sin against Knowledg, and Conscience, let us not despair, or think we have sinned against the Holy Ghost, as it is the Devil's usual temptation, to perswade a Christian, that he hath sinned against knowledg and conscience, and therefore against the Holy Ghost, and that God hath no mercy for him ; and to that purpose he abuseth one special place, *Heb. 6, 4, 5. 6.* For it is impossible, that they which were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good Word of God, and of the power of the world to come, if they fall away, should be renewed again by repentance. By this place, and such like, the subtil Devil labours to bring the children of God to despair, if they commit sin after they be called and enlightened, because they sin against knowledg and conscience.

But, that the children of God may offend, and commit some great crime and evil against knowledg, and conscience, after they be enlightened, and effectually called and sanctified, it appeareth in *Abraham, Sarab, Paul, Peter, &c.* and daily experience prooveth it, and therefore all sins of knowledge, and against

against conscience, are not sins against the Holy Ghost ; but in that place he speaketh of such, as of desperate malice, and set purpose, offend against the Holy Ghost, and wholly fall away, and abandon all Religion, and renounce Christ, and his Gospel : And therefore the Holy Ghost saith not only, if they fall, but if they fall away, that is, even cut themselves clean off from Christ, Again, that they sin wilfully, even desperately persecuting Christ in his members, and crucifie the Lord of glory, and make a mock of him, trample under foot the Son of God, and account the blood of the New Testament as an unholy thing, and despise the Spirit of God : Now none of all these did befall David, Peter, or any elect child of God ; who, though they sin of knowledg, against conscience, yet do they mourn and are grieved for it ; and it is for fear, or by the continual infigation of the Devil, and strength of his temptation, or in haste, or of weakness : but afterwards they do grieve for it, and do desire nothing more than to repent, and to be reconciled to God, which they cannot do that commit the sin against the Holy Ghost .

We learn, that heavenly wisdom, and saving knowledg, which worketh in the heart, and converteth the soul, is the proper work and gift of God alone by his Spirit : Thou (O Lord) hast by thy Spirit taught me wisdom in the secret of my heart, enlightening and giving me a heart to know thee : All the Elect shall be taught of God.

Doct. 5.
Heavenly
wisdom is
the proper
gift of
God's
Spirit
Job 6. 45.
Isa. 45. 3.

Again, the Lord promiseth, *To make all her children Scholars of God*; and he will be their Master and Teacher: So that it is manifest, that God alone is the School-master, who doth teach by his Spirit true and heavenly wisdome, saving and sound knowledg in the heart.

God teac-
cheth his
wisdom
two ways
Rev. 3. 9

E Cor. 3.
LQ. 2.

Acts 1.6.
14.

Use 1.

And this teaching of God contains two parts: First, the enlightning of the mind; Secondly, the bowing of the heart.

First, the Lord doth by his Spirit, which is the Eye-salve, anoint our eyes, and clear our minds, and maketh us able to understand his Will in his Word: By Nature (alas) we cannot know his will; *For the natural man perceives not the things that be of God*; for they besooflithness unto him: and even as the clear Sun is unto a blind man, so is the Word to us; by nature we understand nothing to our good.

Secondly, the Lord teacheth wisdome in the secret of the heart, when he bows the heart to the obedience of his will: so the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, to attend unto the Preaching of Paul.

Seeing it is God who teacheth wisdome, and saving knowledg, we must labour to become his Scholars and Disciples: we must be willing to learn of this Master, to come to his School where his Word is taught, and intreat him that he will teach us his Will, and teach us wisdom in our hearts; *David, Psal. 119.* In many verses, hath it, *Teach me thy Word, O Lord, and I will keep it even to the end.* And as for such as scorn to have God for

for their School-master, to come to his School to be taught of God, all their wisdom, if it were as great as the wisdom of *Solomon and Achitophel*, it is but folly with God.

Seeing God, that is our spiritual School-master, teaching not only the Ear, or Tongue, but he teacheth the heart, in the secret of the heart and affection, by moving and bowing them to obedience: This sheweth, that most men are not taught of God; for all the knowledg that they have of God, and his Word, it is only in words, lip-knowledg, and the knowledg in the tongue; to talk of God, to discourse and commend Religion; but it never cometh to the heart and conscience, to humble them, or to enlighten the mind, truly to convert the soul, or to bow the will and affection to obedience. Well, know this, that all thy knowledg and wisdom cannot do thee any good, unless it bring forth obedience to the will of God; and therefore try and prove thy knowledg, whether it hath humbled thy heart, moved thy affection to obey the will of God, to keep his Commandements: For if thy heart give way to sin, and thou art not purged, nor bettered, nor reformed in heart and life, (alas) thy knowledg is but carnal, and will never save thy poor soul.

And this serves to stop the mouths of many vain hypocrites and dissemblers, who because they can talk and discourse of matters of Religion, and commend the Preacher, do think themselves jolly fellows, and good Christians. But I say, unless the Spirit of God

1 Cor. 8.

God teach thee wisdom in the secret of thy heart, by bowing it to Obedience and Reformation, all thy knowledg is but a carnal and fleshly knowledg, which may befall a Reprobate. Paul shews us how we may undoubtedly know, whether we be taught of God, or not; If any man love God, he is taught of God. So that, by our unfeigned love of God, which will appear in keeping his Commandements, and doing his Will, we shall know whether we be truly taught of God: And he that hath not the love of God, nor care to keep his Commandements, that man, let his knowledg be never so great, certainly he was never yet truly taught of God.

VERSE VII.

7. Purge me with Hysop, and I shall be clean: Wash me, and I shall be whiter than Snow.

David
renews his
former
requests:
verse 2.

David having made his request unto God for mercy, for the pardon of his sins, and used a reason from the free confession and acknowledgment of them, to move the Lord to pity him; doth here again renew his suit, and humble request unto God; and he prayeth here unto God for two great benefits: First, Justification in the free pardon of his sins, and imputation of Christ's righteousness, vers. 7. And secondly, for Sanctification, and Reformation of the whole man, vers. 10. And

And first, *vers. 7.* he intreats the Lord for the free pardon of his sins, that God would cleanse and wash him from them in the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God : And secondly, he prayeth for the blessed fruit of Justification ; namely, peace of conscience, and joy in the Spirit, *verse 8.* For till the conscience have a certificate from God, and a blessed pardon sealed and applied by faith, it cannot be at quiet.

First, seeing *David* had prayed before unto God for mercy and pardon of his sins, and here doth again renew the same Petition, and in other words puts up his request unto God for the same : Hence we learn, that the pardon of our sins is a singular favour and mercy of God bestowed upon us for Jesus Christ's sake ; which appears in that *David* so often in this Psalm prays for it ; therefore it is a great and inestimable mercy, and hardly come by : Not so easily as most men think. *David* shewed how great a blessing it is, in that he preferred it before a Kingdom ; and though he was a King, yet he pronounceth him blessed, not he that was a King, in the 32 Psalm, v. 1, 2. But whose sin is pardoned. God hath sent his Son Jesus Christ to bless you, in turning every one of you from your evil ways, a blessing of all blessings.

Seeing remission of sins is so great a blessing, and hardly come by : First, we learn, that we esteem of this above all other things in the world. If the question were asked, what we desire in the whole world ? we should answer with feeling the pardon of our sins ;

Doct. I.

Pardon of
sin the
greatest
mercy.

Use I.

fins ; and therefore we should desire and seek this blessing above all other. If thou be as poor as Job, and hast this, thou art rich, and a happy man.

Seeing David used so many prayers unto God, and useth such reasons to move the Lord to pity him, and to pardon his offences ; Hence we see, that those are much deceived, who think it the easiest matter in the world, to get the pardon of their sins ; and if they can but say, *Lord have mercy on me*, all is well : No, no, Lord have mercy on me will not serve the turn ; good things are hardly come by, without great travel, labour and study : How much more is it hard to get the pardon of our sins, the salvation of our souls, and life eternal ? And therefore let us observe, that to get the pardon of our sins we must take great pains, labour, and diligence ; we must shed many a tear in bewailing them : They will cost many a sob, and many a sigh, many a prayer and request unto God upon our knees ; and then if we obtain it, Oh, it is a wonderful favour and mercy of God, it will make us truly happy, and blessed for evermore.

Parts of
the verse

In this Verse here are two Persons meant : The first is the Physician, which is God, being intreated by the Patient, *David*, to purge him with *Hysop* ; then the confession of the Patient, *I shall be whiter than Snow* ; which shews a two-fold fruit and effect of his Requests. *David* here puts all the work into God's hands : He doth not say, he will help to make the medicine, but leaves it only to God ;

God ; nor doth *David* say to God, make thou the Salve and I will bring *Hyſop* ; but his Request and Petition was, *Do thou purge me, do thou wash me, then ſhall I be clean, and whiter than Snow* ; which is the confeſſion of the party.

For the firſt Petition, *Purge me with Hyſop*. In theſe words he alludeth to the legal cere monies, and manner of purging uſed in the time of the old Law : in the purifying of the Leper, and of any person polluted, they were to dip the bunch of *Hyſop* in blood, or in wa ter, and ſo ſprinkle it on the perſon to be puri fied : which ceremony was a Type and fi gure of the blood of Jesus Christ, who is that alone ſacrifice and lamb of God, which tak eth away the ſins of the world.

Now then, ſeeing that by this ſprinkling with *Hyſop* in the blood of beaſts, is meant the ſprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ; when he faith, *O Lord purge me with Hyſop*; &c. It is all one as if he ſhould have ſaid, O Lord, I am exceedingly polluted and ſtained with ſin and uncleanness, and no Leper was ever more vile and loathſome than I am now in thy ſight, neither is there any water to wash and purge me ; but I beſeech thee, of thy mercy, to wash me, and to ſprinkle my ſoul with the blood of that immaculate Lamb *Christ Jesus*, that can alone take away my ſins, and ſo I shall be made clean and pure again.

Hence mark, a miserable and cursed fruit of ſin : No Leproſie did ever ſo defile the body of man in the time of the Jews, as ſin doth

Deut. 14.
5, 7.
Numb. 10.

Dot. 2.
Sin is a Le proſie.

doth stain and defile both body and soul; no Dunghill nor stinking Carrion is so loathesom in the eyes of man, as an unclean sinner in the sight of God, till he be washed and purged in the blood of Christ.

This is the reason which the Lord giveth, *Joshua 7. 12.* Why Israel fell before their enemies, and he went not forth with their Armies, when they fell before the men of *Ai*. Therefore the children of Israel cannot stand before their enemies, but have turned their backs upon their enemies, because, they are execrable. We see then the nature of sin, how it maketh a man abominable and detestable in the sight of God.

Use 1.

Seeing this is the nature and fruit of sin, that it defileth and staineth both body and soul, and maketh them far more loathesom and vile than any Toad or Serpent; how should we abhor sin, and every wicked way? We will be very loath to eat Poyson, or Rats-bane, or any thing else wherein is danger: Oh, sin is a kind of Rats-bane, which infects and poysons both body and soul, and therefore let us shun sin and touch it not.

Use 2.

When as we be defiled with sin, and so made filthy and unclean in the sight of God, and more vile than a Leper, or Dunghil, or Carrion, Toad or Serpent: Oh, let us pray, with *David*, to be washed and purged from our filthiness; let us repent of all our sins, bewail our uncleanness: Let us by faith, as with a bunch of *Hyssop*, besprinkle our souls with the blood of Jesus Christ..

Seeing

Seeing David desired to be purged with *Hysop*: We learn hence that the Lord would not that man should despise such Ceremonies and Types of Christ as he himself commanded in the time of the Law; and though it may seem a vain and needless thing to besprinkle them with a bunch of *Hysop*, dipped in the blood of a beast; yet seeing it was the Commandement of God, they did not despise the Ceremony, being a Type of the blood of Christ: When they could not behold with bodily eyes the blood of Christ, it pleased God by such Ceremonies, and Types, to help their Faith, by sprinkling the blood of a beast, to shew unto them, that they must be sprinkled in their souls with the blood of Jesus Christ.

Hence we learn, by the example of *David*, and all the Holy Fathers, and Servants of God, in the time of the Law, to use all such Sacraments and Ceremonies as God commandeth in his Word, for the helping of our faith: we cannot see the blood of Christ, nor touch it with our outward senses; yet the Lord hath appointed the Sacrement of Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord, that in them we might see, feel, touch, and taste, as it were, the body and blood of Jesus Christ: And therefore, all those which despise these Sacraments, making little or no account of them, shew that they despite the Ordinance of God, and so make light of that which is ordained for the good of their souls.

Doll. 3.
The Ceremonies under the Law were but to lead us unto Jesus Christ.

Use.
Obedience required to God's Ordinances.

Mark

Doct. 4.
Christ's
blood a-
lone doth
purge our
sins.
Heb. 9. 9.
1 Joh. 1.7.
Rev. 1. 5.
Joh. 1. 9.
1 Pet. 1.2.

The use of
the cere-
monies un-
der the
Law.

Note.

Mark further, when that *David* prayeth the Lord to purge him with *Hysop*, the word signifies to purge by Sacrifice, even the Sacrifice of the Son of God, and by his Death and Blood-shedding to purge his sins away: So as he confesseth, there is nothing in Heaven, or Earth, that is of force to purge him from his offences, and uncleanness, but the blood of Christ alone. It is not the blood of Bullocks, Lambs, and Goats, that can wash away the least spot of sin, but even the blood of that immaculate Lamb, Christ Jesus; and to him all the Sacrifices had relation, and shadowed our Saviour Jesus Christ the true Paschal Lamb unto us.

And this was the reason why *David* maketh mention of *Hysop*, that God would *purge him with Hysop*, because God, in the time of the Law, ordained this Ceremony for a confirmation of their faith, and to help the people of the *Jews* to the better sight and knowledge of the promised Messiah; for seeing our Saviour was not yet come into the world, and they could not see the work of redemption as yet performed, the Lord would lead them by these Ceremonies unto Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, that they might see him, as it were before their eyes: For when they saw a Beast slain, and the blood spilt, they then took a bunch of *Hysop* dipt in the blood of the Beast, and besprinkled them that offered the same with the blood. They were thereby taught even so much, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and promised Messiah, should be slain, and put to death, his blood

blood shed for their sins, and they must by faith, as a bunch of *Hyso^p*, besprinkle their souls with the blood of our Saviour for the pardon of their sins.

It is true indeed, that the Lord hath eased us, in the time of the Gospel, of all those old and ancient Ceremonies ; neither is it the will of God, that we should be clogged with the senseless, needless and beggarly rudiments being the Ceremonies and Traditions of men, which become not the simplicity of the Gospel. But yet hath in mercy appointed certain helps and means to lead us unto Christ Jesus ; as the two Sacraments to help our faith : For we being as yet carnal, (alas) we cannot behold any more than we see. And therefore the Lord hath appointed them as helps to lead us to this Saviour, to set him before our eyes in the water in Baptism, and bread and wine in the Lord's Supper ; that so our faith should be confirmed thereby, and we might even see Christ Jesus before our eyes. And therefore, as David did carefully use such helps and ceremonies as God commanded, for the strengthning of their faith ; so let us be careful to use the helps that God hath left under the Gospel, for the strengthning of our weak faith.

Gal. 4. 6.

Purge me with Hyso^p.

The meaning is this, accept of that most perfect and everlasting Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, for the punishment due to my sin : As if he should have said ; O Lord, I confess

I
The meaning of the words.

I have sinned exceedingly, I have been born in sin, and have by Murther and Adultery deserved to be condemned eternally, and to have the curse and punishment due to my sin to be cast upon me ; but I beseech thee, in mercy, to accept of the blood shedding of thy Son, and my Saviour Jesus Christ, for the satisfaction due for my sin. David, he watered his cheeks by day, and his couch by night. And indeed, tears of true penitents are the wine of the Angels ; and those that have a sorrowful heart, have the Sword of David, and the Bow of Jonathan, for there is no Rhetorick, in God's sight, to that of tears and sighs ; for tears have a voice, as it may appear by David's words, *Tou hast heard the voice of my weeping :* And by our unseigned tears we offer violence to heaven, and tie the ears of God to the tongues of men.

And whereas the justification of a sinner in the sight of God stands on two parts : First, remission and pardon of sin ; Secondly, the imputation of Christ's righteousness ; Methinks the Prophet requires and begs both these at the hands of God : First, to be purged, or, as the word signifies, to purge, (not by washing) but by sacrificing, to appease the wrath and anger of God, by the blood of Christ. Secondly, when he prayeth to be washed, he desireth to be made pure, and righteous, not in his own righteousness, but only in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, imputed to him, and laid hold upon by Faith.

Seeing David entreats the Lord that he would *Purge him* ; that is, accept of the most perfect

perfect Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, for the punishment due to his sins : We learn, that there is no name given under Heaven, whereby a man shall be saved, but only in the name of Jesus Christ ; it is not the blood of Bullocks, Lambs, and Goats, that can wash away the least spot of sin; but only the blood of that immaculate Lamb Christ Jesus. It is Christ himself that must purge us, who is our High-Priest : for we cannot pacifie and purifie our sins by *Hysop*, or by the blood of a young Heifer, or by oblations and offerings, nothing but Christ, and his Merits, can wash and purifie us from our sins : It is only he that hath purged our sins by shedding his own blood, and hath procured us the pardon of our sins ; and now sitteth at the right hand of God, making still intercession for all true penitent sinners.

Hence we see the endless and unspeakable mercy of God to miserable men ; who, when no other means could be found, no Water or Herb could heal the soul of a sinner, and wash him from sin, and the punishment of it, but only the precious blood of the Son of God, was content to give his own Son to death for us ; which made St. John to admire it : And if God hath not failed us in this, but could rather be content to have his only Son put to death, and hang on the Cross, than we should perish, how should he deny any smaller and lighter matter to us ?

Behold here the greatness and hainousness of man's sins, which could be purged by no Angel in Heaven or Earth, but only by the blood

Salvation
is to be
sought for
only in
Christ.
1 Joh. 1. 7.
1 Pet. 1. 18
Rev. 1. 5.

Vſe 1.

Joh. 3. 16.
Ro. 8. 32.

Vſe 2.

blood of Jesus Christ alone : If all Men and Angels should have died, and been cast for ever into Hell-fire, they could not satisfie the infinite wrath of God for one sin ; but the blood of Jesus Christ must be shed, else we can have no pardon.

Use 3.

This condemns that wicked and erroneous Doctrine of the Papists, who teach indeed, that *Christ*, by his Death, hath satisfied God's justice for the fault and eternal punishment due to their sins ; but men must either in this Life, by Works, or buy it of the Pope, or else in Purgatory satisfie God's justice for temporal punishments : Now then, what is this, but to make the Sacrifice and Death of Christ imperfect, when as it must be patched and pieced with mens merits ? but we believe, and hold, Christ's death is a sufficient Sacrifice for all our sins.

Use. 4.
Rom. 6.
Gal. 3.

Would you then have the pardon of your sins ? Every sin deserves death, and the curse of God : Now, there is no way but this, to believe in Jesus Christ, to embrace him by Faith, that so God the Father may for his sake pardon our sins, accept of his Death and Passion for the punishment of them all.

And that we may be purged from our sins, both the fault and the punishment, by the Blood and Sacrifice of Christ, we must first repent of them, with *David*, be grieved for them, bewail them, amend our lives, and become new creatures in Christ Jesus ; we must beg for pardon of them at the hands of God : we must do with our sins, as *Pbingas* did with *Zimri* and *Cozbi*, pierce them even through and through.

Secondly,

Secondly, besides, we must be sprinkled with *Hysop*, that is, as in the time of the Law, they dipped the *Hysop* in the blood of the Beast, and so besprinkled the person to be cleansed ; even so must we by Faith, as it were with a bunch of *Hysop*, apply the blood of Christ, and by Faith besprinkle our defiled Consciences, it will cleanse us from all our sins, and satisfie the wrath of God for the punishment.

But if men either do not repent of them, and leave their sins, or do not come with faith to apply the blood of Christ, they cannot have pardon : As, if there were a sovereign Plaister to cure any sore, if a man do not apply it to the wound, but let it lye in a Box, it will do him no good ; so unless we apply the blood of Christ to our wounds and sores by Faith, alas, it cannot help us : And as the woman with the bloody issue touched Christ's garment, and was healed ; so if we can by faith touch the blood of our Saviour, and apply it to our selves, it will heal all the bleeding wounds of sin.

The second request is, that God would wash him, and make him pure, not imputing his offences unto him, but covering them in the Death and Obedience of his Son Jesus Christ : And therefore, in the second part of this verse, he prayeth for the imputation of Christ's righteousness ; namely, that God would not only remit the punishment due to his sins, but look upon him as he is in Christ, covered with his righteousness, and that God would account him just for our Saviour's

Psal. 32.
1, 2.

viour's obedience, holiness, satisfaction and righteousness. For when God beholds a poor sinner covered with righteousness, holiness, and obedience of his Son our Saviour, then he accounts him as no sinner, but just and righteous : even as a man beholding any red thing through a red Glass, it appeareth red, or of the same colour ; so if the Lord look on us in our Saviour, we seem righteous and holy before him.

Doct. 6.
Sin defiles
a man.

Whereas the Prophet *David* intreats the Lord to wash him, he shews that he was defiled with sin, and stained with uncleanness, and so stood in great need of God's mercy, to cleanse his filthy soul, and defiled conscience, now polluted with most vile adultery, and filthy uncleanness : That his soul was now besprinkled with the innocent blood of that faithful Servant, and loyal Subject, *uriah* the Hittite. And as it was with *David*, sin infected him, made him vile and loathsome, filthy, and abominable in the sight of God : Even so it doth begrime the face of the best of God's Children, it stains and pollutes them both in soul and body; yea, no carrion is more loathsome and odious than a sinner defiled and polluted with sin is in the sight of God.

The Leprosie was a loathsome disease, it infected the body, and the very garments, yea, the stones and timber : But this spiritual Leprosie, sin, infects the whole man, body and soul ; yea, it infecteth heaven and earth, and all other creatures in the world ; and there is nothing that can take away the

spots

spots and blemishes of sin, but only the precious blood of Jesus Christ, laid hold on by true faith.

Well, seeing all of us are thus defiled with sin, as *David* was, in soul and body, let us desire to be washed, let us bewail them, loath and hate them, entreat the Lord that he would not impute our sins unto us, but cover them under the Robe of Christ's righteousness; and that we should abhor every sin for this cause, because it defiles us, it pollutes us, and makes us unworthy to appear in God's presence.

Seeing *David*, though an holy Prophet of God, a man after God's own heart, yet desires the Lord to wash him from his sins, and to cover them in the obedience of Christ Jesus, applyed by faith: We see, that no man is able to stand before the face of God in his own righteousness, in his own works, or worthiness; for if any might, who might better have done it than *David*, a man truly sanctified, a holy Prophet, a man after God's own heart? Yea, the Prophet *Esay* saith, that all our righteousness is no better than a stained clout, full of blood, and all pollution: And so St. *Paul* desires that he may not be found in his own righteousness, and worthiness, at the day of Judgment, but in the righteousness of Christ, laid hold on by faith. And therefore, let us renounce all our own goodness and worthiness, and account all but as dung in respect of Christ and his righteousness. And as for the Church of *Rome*, we may see their intollerable pride, that they

K

do

Iса. 64. 6.

Phil. 3. 9
1 Cor. 1.
30.

do so much rest and rely upon their own goodness, and worthiness, merits and righteousness, to stand upon it, and appear in it for remission of sins, and life eternal. But (alas) if *Paul*, *David*, and all the Saints of God abhor themselves in dust and ashes, desire to be purged, and washed, and covered in the Obedience and Righteousness of Jesus Christ; yea, count all their own Righteousness but as dung, and dare not appear in it before the seat of God's Judgments, but in the Righteousness of Christ: Shall any Papists of them dare to stand before God in Judgment, in his own Righteousness and Worthiness? No, no, he shall tremble and quail, and not abide so great and glorious a presence.

I shall be clean, I shall be whiter than Snow.

IN these words the Prophet sheweth the event and issue of this, when a man doth truly repent, is reconciled to God in Jesus Christ, and is washed and purged from his sins by faith in Christ's blood; then he is made of a most vile and loathsome sinner, a most blessed and most holy child of God; of a filthy unclean-limb of the Devil, a blessed member of Jesus Christ, beautiful and glorious in the eyes of God, being covered in Christ's Righteousness.

Seeing *David* faith, when God shall pardon him his sins, on his true Repentance, and be reconciled unto him, covering his sin in the merits and obedience of Christ. Then

David. 7.
The wo-
ful estate
of all na-
tural men.

it shall be clean : Then, before a man repent, be reconciled to God by Jesus Christ, and be purged from his sins, he is most unclean, and filthy, vile, loathsome, and abominable in the sight of God : and indeed so he is ; no Carrion worse, no Toad so ugly, nor Serpent so full of poysen, as a filthy sinner polluted with sin, till he repent, get the pardon of them, and be reconciled to God by Christ ; I pray you take knowledge of this Doctrine, whatsoever thou art, high, low, rich, poor, young, old, Prince, or Noble, till thou repent, till thou turn to God, till thou get the pardon of thy sins, and be washed by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, thou art most vile and miserable, thou art most unclean and filthy, thou art more ugly than the venomous Toad, more loathsome than the Serpent, more filthy and stinking than the Carrion ; yea, no creature is so loathsome before God as a filthy sinner, that lives in sin without Repentance, that is not washed and purged from them in the blood of Christ. David, he thought he could never be clean, and purged of his sin, till he had confessed them, and labours to repair the ruins of so great offences : which made him so courageously accuse himself, defying the Devil and his flattering pleasures. David did not leave one sin, but thrust it head-long out of his heart by Repentance and Contrition.

Well, seeing this is the woful and miserable estate of all impenitent sinners, how should this move every one with speed to repent, to run to God, to seek to be reconciled

Use I.

led to God by his Son, and our only Saviour, to desire pardon and forgiveness of all his sins, to be washed and cleansed from them all in and by the blood and merits of Christ? For this know, I say, till thou art reconciled to God, dost repent, art washed and cleansed, thy case is fearful, thou wert better be a Toad than a man without this: Thou maist go in silk and velvet, in gay and golden apparel; thou maist have a fair body, perfume thee with sweet odours, &c. but till thou Repent, thou art filthy and loathsome in God's sight.

Oh how should this serve to pluck down the pride of many impotent transgressors? Men and Women think highly of themselves, ruffle it out in Silk and Velvet of the newest fashion; but all this while they know not that their poor souls are loathsome in God's sight, that God hates them, and cannot abide them: Oh then, be washed, be cleansed in the blood of Christ, which alone can wash away our sins.

Oh that men would remember that saying of Christ, *Thou art poor, blind, miserable, and naked*; then they would lay with Job, *I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes*: Then they would never give any rest unto their Souls until they have repented, and got pardon, be reconciled, and washed from their filthy sins.

Seeing David acknowledgeth, that when he shall repent, get pardon of his sins, be reconciled to God, be washed from the filthiness of his sins, then he shall be clean, and white,

*Isa. 1. 16.
Rev. 2. 14.
Job 42. 6.*

white, yea, most white, even as Snow. Hence we learn, that as a filthy transgressor, that lives and goes on still in sin without Repentance, there is no creature more ugly, hateful, and unclean: So the child of God, that doth repent, that is washed in the blood of Christ, reconciled to God, he is a blessed and glorious creature, most beautiful and fair in the sight of God; not by any goodness, or worthiness of his own, but by the mercy of God so accounting us, and the Merits and Worthiness of his Son Jesus Christ, in whose Righteousness we shall be found Righteous, and by whose Merits and Worthiness we are covered. The Saints of God go in long white Robes, which are made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Seeing this is the blessed and happy estate of all those that do truly repent, be reconciled to God, embrace and believe in Jesus Christ, are washed and cleansed from their sins in his Blood, and covered in his Righteousness: O, how should it move every man and woman to run to God, to forsake their evil ways, and their filthy sins, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, to believe, to become the Sons and Daughters of God! It is an honourable thing to be a Son to an earthly King, to be cloathed in cloth of Gold, &c. But if we compare this with the blessed and glorious estate of God's children, it is but dung, and beggary; it is but like rotten rags, and beggars clouts, taken off the Dunghill: *He that is wise, shall shine as the Firmament;* and

Can. 1. 7.
Eze. 16.5,
10, 11, 12.
Rev. 1.38.
1 Cor. 9.
10.

Dan. 12.

be that converts many to righteousness, shall
shine as the Sun in the Firmament ; O them, again and again, let us repent, let us be reconciled to God, let this wedding Garment, which will make us beautified before God.

Ver 2.

Another use is this, seeing that the state of God's children even in this World, is so blessed, and so glorious, so beautiful and excellent, being reconciled unto God, washed in the blood of Christ, and cloathed with the most pure Robe of Christ's righteousness : Here is matter of comfort to all the poor children of God, whom the world is not worthy of. Alas, they are esteemed as beggars, they are esteemed as vile, and base, miserable, and cast-aways, by ungodly men ; they are made as the dung in the streets, and as the off-scouring of the world, and men even tread and trample them under their feet : Now, what is that which may comfort the hearts of God's children ? Surely this, that though they seem vile, base and miserable, in the blind eyes of all sinful men, yet they be most white, beautiful and glorious in the eyes of God, our heavenly Father : Though the world hate us, contemn us, be weary of us, loath and abhor us ; let us remember the Lord loves us, takes delight in us, we are fair and most beautiful in his sight. They do not see what we be, they cannot know that we are little Princes, Sons, and great Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Sons and Daughters of the great God ; and therefore this may teach us patience, seeing we know that God loves us, and that we are dear

1 Joh. 3.2.

dear unto him, though the World hate us; So it is with many Prophets of God, and true believers, whom the World was not worthy of.

Heb. 11.

Lastly, here is matter of great comfort and consolation for all grievous sinners, that have committēd many and grievous sins, that if they will unfeignedly repent, and turn to God, embrace and lay hold on Christ, God will make them, of the cursed firebrands of Hell, heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven; of the limbs of the Devil, the members of Jesus Christ; of adulterers, and filthy sinners, such as Joseph was, chaste and pure, and the holy servants of God. This the Lord promiseth men, that if they will repent, turn to God, and forsake their sinful ways, Then, *Though their sins were as red as scarlet, I will make them as white as snow; though they were as crimson, yet will I make them even as wooll:* That is to say, though men be guilty of bloody sins, notorious crimes, as David of murther, uncleanness, whoredome, adultery, covetousness, swearing, contempt of the Word of God, &c. Yet, if thou hast the grace to repent, certainly the Lord will most thorowly purge and wash away all thy sins; he will seal thee a general pardon of them all, if thou wilt only repent, and lay hold upon Christ.

Isa. 1. 18.

19.

O then, let me speak unto you in the name of God: Hast thou been a vile blasphemer? hast thou been a contemner of the Word? a persecutor of God's children? hast thou

Luk. 15.

2Cor. 5.19

been a murtherer, a cruel oppressor, usurer ? hast thou been an adulterer, a filthy liver ? Well, if thou wilt now repent, turn to God, bewail thy sins, beg pardon for them ; if thou wilt renounce, leave and forsake them, become a new creature in Christ Jesus, and amend thy sinful life, and, as *David* did, disthrone Satán, and cast out of thy mind and heart those Legions of sins which by nature we have, and by our over-fight committed : Lo then, God doth this day offer mercy unto thee ; he will embrace thee, as he did the Prodigal child ; he will wash thee in the blood of his own Son ; he will cover thee in his Righteousness ; he will pardon all thy sins, and never lay them to thy charge ; he will make of thee that art a vile and miserable sinner, a very fire-brand of Hell, a blessed member of Jesus Christ. And therefore, let not the number or greatness of thy sins hinder thee ; for if thou canst repent, God will pardon them all, and receive thee to mercy : O then, if thou wilt not for all this repent, and turn to God, leave and forsake thy sins and impieties, become a new creature in Christ Jesus, but lie in thy sins, and wallow in the filth of them still, and harden thy heart against all the sweet and gracious offers of mercy, how art thou worthy to perish, if thou shalt despise so great Salvation ?

VERSE

VERSE VIII.

Make me to bear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

David having, in the former Verse, craved mercy at the hands of God, for the pardon of his sins, which were both many and great ; he doth in this verse, beg at God's hands the blessed fruit of the same : Namely, the blessed and comfortable persuasions of God's mercy, and assurance of his love, for the pardon of his sins, that God would even testify unto his poor soul, and wounded conscience, by his Spirit inwardly, that he was appeased and pacified with him, and in Jesus Christ reconciled unto him ; that so being thus satisfied of God's love, of reconciliation with God, and the remission of his sins, his wounded conscience might be comforted, his dying soul, and heavy heart might be restored, and his exceeding sorrow might be mitigated and asswaged. David now at length knew, that Nature was an ill guide to Heaven, therefore he desires the Lord to direct him in his ways, that he might hear of joy and gladness, *That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*

In this same Verse note two special points, First, what is the thing David so earnestly craved of God : Namely, that he would cause him to have comfortable and happy news of God's mercy, and assurance of the remission of his sins, *Make me to bear, &c.*

David here intreats for peace of conscience.

Sin hath taken away his inward joy.

Parts of this verse.

Secondly, the end whereof he so begs and requests for this : Namely, that his broken heart, and bleeding conscience might be comforted, and his unspeakable grief by the feeling of God's love might be finished ; *That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*

Make me to hear.

AS if he should have said, O Lord, I beseech thee to witness thy love and favour unto me ; yea, I beseech thee send thy blessing and holy Spirit, to certifie my conscience of the blessed pardon of all my sins, that thou wilt not enter into judgment with me for them.

And that which *David* doth here confess of himself, all the children of God shall one day be sure to find by experience, that sin doth spoil them of their inward peace and joy. Oh then, if we could remember how sweet the joy and peace is which by sin we lose, for the vain and transitory pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, we would never make so bad exchange.

The main point is, what it is that *David* so earnestly craves of God ; namely, that God would assure him of the blessed pardon of his sins.

But some may say, this seems needless ; did not the Lord send *Nathan* to him, who (after *David* had confessed his sin) told him, *The Lord hath pardoned thy sins, thou shalt not die.* How then comes it to pass, that here he prays

prays the Almighty to cause him to hear and feel this, the remission of his sins? I answer, first, it is true that *Nathan*, the Prophet of God did assure him of the remission of his sins upon his true repentance: But yet *David's* heart being wounded with sin, could not so fully feel and find the assurance of God's love, and remission of his sins, and therefore he entreats the Lord to certify his conscience inwardly by his Spirit, and to assure him of the same. Secondly, I answer, that though *David* heard *Nathan* tell him, that the Lord would remit his offences, yet he judged the outward testimony of all men and Angels as nothing, unless the certificate and the testimony of the Holy Ghost go with it, inwardly to certify, assure, and persuade the poor wounded conscience of God's love and favour.

Hence we may learn sundry points of instruction: First, that as *David* prays to be assured of God's love, and the remission of his sins; so every true child of God that believes, and repents of all his offences, may know, and be resolved in the confidence of God's love and favour, and the forgiveness of them all. And in the Articles of our Faith, we do profess, we believe the Remission of our sins, and Life everlasting: And seeing we pray for this, that God would forgive our sins and trespasses, therefore we believe it, else we sin in praying for it; so that every one that truly repenteth, and embraceth Jesus Christ, is a new creature, hates vile ways, endeavours in heart and life to please God, that

Dott. I.
Every
child of
God may
be assured
of the par-
don of his
sins.

2 Pet. I.

that he may know, and be assured that he is reconciled to God, and his sins pardoned.

Vſe 1.

Rom. 8. 28

Job 13. 15.

19. 25.

Ps. 125. 1.

This condemns that hellish Doctrine of the Papists, who teach, and hold, that no man can be assured of the pardon of his sins, unless God send a Revelation from Heaven to do it : And that it is a virtue of Faith, to doubt of God's love: But how did Paul doubt, when he said, *I am fully persuaded, &c.* Alas, how dare a vile sinner, not justified, nor assured of God's love, and the pardon of his sins, how dares he come to call on God, and make his prayer unto him ; Dares a Traytor come to his King, or speak unto him, not having pardon ? Well, this Doctrine of doubting, it is a rack for all wounded consciences, and afflicted souls, when they cannot tell whether God loveth or haterh them, nor know not that their sins be pardoned.

Vſe. 2.

And therefore, that Religion which teacheth Doubtings, and pronounceth them accursed who hold that a man may be assured of Salvation ; we accuse it as a Doctrine, enemy to Faith and Salvation. And indeed, it is strange to see, that whereas they teach, a man is able to fulfil the whole Law of God, and by his works to merit eternal life ; yet they accuse him, if he say he is sure to be saved : So directly doth one point of their false Doctrine impugne another. Indeed it is no marvel, though their Religion can yield no comfort for the certainty of Salvation, seeing they draw men from off the Foundation, Christ Jesus in whom only it is promised,

mised, that we shall find rest for our souls.

Seeing David prays for this assurance of God's love, to be assured of the pardon of his sins by his Spirit, and that upon his true repentance; this shews, that the confidence that most men have, is a fond presumption and security: They would not doubt of God's love for all the World; they believed ever since they were born, and thus they brag of their strong faith, but they deceive themselves; for till a man do repent, turn to God, believe in Christ, become a new creature, he can have no assurance of God's love, or pardon for his sins.

Let all true Christians examine themselves, whether they feel and find this blessed assurance and persuasion of God's love, and the pardon of their sins: If thou hast it, make much of it, lose it not; if thou want it, use all means, give all diligence to get it; repent, turn to God, beg mercy and pardon for thy sins, embrace Jesus Christ, believe in him, that thou maist be assured; and never be at rest till thou canst say, I am perswaded of God's love in Christ Jesus: *I know my Redeemer liveth*; I am perswaded I am the child of God; else a man can have no joy, peace, nor comfort,

Though Nathan had told him his sins were forgiv'en, yet David could not be assured, till he felt the inward assurance and certificate of God's Spirit, to persuade and witness the loue of God unto him for the pardon of his sins.

*Doct. 2.
Man's testi-
mony of
the remis-
sion of sins
is nothing
without
the testi-
mony of
God's Spi-
rit.
Rom. 8.15.*

Hence

Rom. 8.15.

Note.

Rom. 8.15,
16.2 Cor. 1.
22.

Hence we learn, that it is not the testimony of all men and Angels that can assure us in our souls of God's love and pardon of our sins, without the inward special certificate and persuasion of God's Spirit, who is called *the Spirit of Adoption*, because he doth reveal, yea, perswade, and also assure our souls that we *be adopted*. If Peter, Paul, Nathan, yea, all the world, nay, if any Angel from heaven should tell me *I am the child of God*, yet unless God doth further certifie my conscience inwardly by his Spirit, I should not be assured, but doubt still, even as David did in this placee. Although Nathan had said, *Thy sins are forgiven*; yet David could not be assured, until he had the inward and comfortable persuasion of God's holy Spirit. Men cannot know the secret counsel of God, they may deceive, and be deceived; but the Spirit of God knows all things; and the Apostle saith, *We have not received the spirit of bondage to fear again; but ye have received the spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. The same spirit beareth witness to our spirits, that we are the children of God; and because ye are sons, therefore God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, whereby we cry Abba Father.* Again, God the Father hath sealed us, and put into our hearts the earnest of his Spirit. So that you see, it is the only work of the Spirit, to assure our hearts and consciences of God's love, and the pardon of our sins; and without this inward certificate and assurance of the Spirit, all the testimonies of men and Angels cannot assure our consciences.

Well

Well then, seeing that there can be no assurance in a man's conscience of the remission of our sins, and life eternal, but by the inward certificate and testimony of God's Spirit, let us pray for this, labour to find and feel our hearts persuaded and assured inwardly by the Holy Ghost of the pardon of our sins, and the love of God in Christ. *Prove your selves, whether ye be in the Faith.* And because men are deceived generally with a fond presumption, and foolish Opinion, that they be the children of God, and shall be saved; and this carnal presumption is more common than true saving Faith, I will shew how you may know this testimony and certificate of God's love, when it is in our consciences.

First, the Spirit of God assures no such man remission of his sins, but such as be humbled for them, repent of them, leave and forsake them, become new creatures, and walk in newness of life. And therefore, if thou livest in sin, be neither humbled for them, nor bewail them, hast an intention to live still in thy sins, ignorance, lying, swearing, covetousness, uncleanness, &c. Thou canst have no assurance of God's love; and this assurance of thine, if thou hast any, it is mere self-conceit: For where men do not repent, and turn unto God, and amend their lives, there is no faith, neither is the Spirit of God remaining in them; and therefore they cannot be assured of God's love and mercy.

Secondly, the Spirit of Adoption doth not only tell a man that he is the child

2 Cor. 13.
5.

Marks of
God's Spi-
rit.

1. What
man re-
pents of
his sin.

2. Is per-
suaded of
the Spirit.

of

of God, but doth by sundry arguments and reasons, perswade the child of God, that he is elected, that God loves him, and that his sins be forgiven. But wicked men have no such thoughts in their hearts, only they have a fond opinion and conceit, which is no good ground ; neither did the Spirit of God ever perswade their hearts thereto.

2. The effects will appear.

We shall know the testimony of God's Spirit, that it is sure and sound, by the fruits and effects of it : For if the Spirit of God do truly testifie the love of God for the remission of our sins, and life eternal ; then it will follow, that we shall hate our sins, loath and abhor them, because they grieve our most gracious God and loving Father : Yea, we shall desire in all things to honour the Almighty, to do his Will, to please and serve him : So that, if we find and feel these things, a true hatred and dislike of sin, because it dishonours the Lord, a desire to live in holiness and righteousness before him all our dayes, it is a certain sign, that the Spirit of the Lord doth assure us of our reconciliation with the Lord. But if men find not this, no hatred of sin, no love to obey his Will, and keep his Commandments, but ignorance, rebellion, and the like : Let them brag what they will of their strong faith, feeling of God's love, and I know not what, yet it is certain, they have not the Testimony of God's Spirit which *David* prayeth for here, but a fond and

and foolish opinion proceeding of self-love, carnal security, and devilish presumption, which in the end will fail them.

Make me hear of joy and gladness.

IN these words note a third point of Doctrine; Namely, whence and where David looked for comfort; as from the Word of God; hearing the same opened, and preached unto him: So that in this example we learn, that all true comfort, and spiritual consolation, is to be learned, and searched out of the word of God; that is the Store-house of heavenly comfort. And therefore our Saviour Christ bids us search there for consolation; *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think to have eternal Life.* Again, it is called *Spirit and Life*, because God uses the Preaching and Ministry of the Gospel to beget spiritual Life. It is called, *The Word of Truth, even the Gospel of our Salvation.* The Lord might have illuminated the mind of the Eunuch, *Acts 8.* by the immediate working of his own Spirit, and have made him understand the Scripture which he was reading, without any Interpreter; but it pleased the Lord to do it by the Ministry of Philip: He might have likewise communicated his Spirit to Cornelius, *Acts 10.* But the Lord would not do it, but by the Ministry of Peter, according to that of the Apostle, *1 Cor. 1. 11.* *It hath pleased the Lord by the foolishness of preaching to save so many as believe;* and so many shall believe as are ordained to

Doit. 3.
God conveys comfort unto us by the Ministry of his holy Word.

Joh. 5.63.

Joh. 1. 13.

Ep. 1. 13.

eternal Life. If then thou be desirous, with David, to hear of joy and gladness, and to have assurance of the pardon of thy sins, then reverence the Ministry of the Word, by which the Lord communicateth his Spirit to such as he will save. And surely this must needs be an exceeding comfort to all the children of God, that God doth not only freely forgive them their sins, but also telleth them of the forgiveness of the same, sealing to their hearts by his holy Spirit the testimony thereof.

Use 1.

Psal. 119.

55.

Pf. 84. 1.

Psal. 45.

Pf. 4.

Rev. 22, 2.

See, God hath appointed the Ministry of the holy Word to be the means to work all true and spiritual comfort : Oh then, in all our needs, wants, and distresses, let us search the Word of God ; there is comfort to be found, many heavenly and sweet promises of the Gospel, to quicken and renew our poor distressed souls ; and this the Prophet David knew by good experience, that there is more found comfort in the feeling of God's love, than in all the world besides. It may well be compared to the Tree St. John speaketh of, which beareth twelve manner of fruits, and the leaves of the Tree serve to cure and heal diseased and wounded souls ; and the fruit of the Tree of the Word of God is most sweet and pleasant ; and therefore let us, if we would desire true comfort indeed, seek it in the means ; namely, in the Word, and Ministry of the Holy Ghost.

Use 2.

This sheweth, that all those be enemies unto their own souls, that despise the Ministry of the Word, and the Preaching of the Gospel.

Gospel. If ever thou find one jot of true comfort, thou must have it in the means that God hath ordained; namely, in the Ministry of the Word: Let men seek it elsewhere, and they shall find none. Men may seek delight and joy in their Gold and Silver, in merry Company, in this or that, as men use to do; but (alas) they cannot find it there; yea, experience sheweth, that distressed souls, full of wo and misery, could never find true comfort in any thing, save in the Ministry of the Word of God, and there they have found endless comfort, by hearing of the blessed and saving promises of the Gospel: And therefore, if a man shall neglect, or despise the Word preached, how can they ever find joy or gladness, or any dram of saving comfort?

Whereas *David* craves of God, that he would cause him to hear of joy and gladness, that is, that his sins were all pardoned, and he reconciled to God in Christ, that so he might have some good matter of joy and gladness; [For the eye of *David's* Reason made him see more than the eye of Nature could let him see; for till *Nathan* did open the cause by a similitude, he thought all was well on his part, which took *David's* ears and attention the better;]

We learn hence, that there is no sound joy nor comfort in any man or woman, but only in the free pardon of his sin, and feeling of God's love in Christ: And all other love which men do frame and devise unto themselves, alas, it is but from the teeth outward,

it

Use 3.
Doct. 4.
Where sin
is not par-
doned,
there can
be no true
joy.

Jer. 9. 23.

it is not sound, nor durable, it is but carnal and earthly, and will easily be lost : *This saith the Lord, let not the wise man rejoice in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength, nor the rich man in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he knoweth me to be the Lord;* and without this there can be no perfect joy, as we see in David, and so in all distressed offenders, till they feel the assurance of God's love for the pardon of their sins.

Use I.

Rom. 14. 7.

Esay 57.
21.

Object.

Answ.

This shews, that the common joy of most men and women, is but a carnal joy, earthly, and vain ; it is not spiritual, it is not true joy : For all the while they eat, drink, make themselves merry, laugh, and be jovial, they live in sin, in danger of God's anger, and condemnation ; no feeling of God's love, no assurance of Salvation ; and then how can they have any true joy ? for this proceeds in the assurance of God's love, and the remission of sin : *The Kingdom of God stands not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;* but unto the wicked there is no peace.

Object. But do we not see, that wicked men that live in sin, that be notorious sinners, swearers, blasphemers, drunkards, &c. that these live in mirth and jollity, in eating, drinking, in ease, and idleness ; and the children of heaven have much sorrow, and heaviness, grief, trouble, and wrong ?

Answ. Yea, it is true, that wicked men, that live in sin, pass their days in eating, drinking, sport, and pastime, no sorrow, nor heaviness,

heaviness, but spend their days in pleasure :
but suddenly they go down to Hell.

Job 21.13.
Psal. 32.

Now, who will call this a true joy ? Nay, it is a swinish and brutish joy, carnal and fleshly ; for if they knew all, and saw their misery, that they be in danger of God's eternal vengeance, of Hell and damnation, Oh then they would mourn, and turn all their mirth into tears. If a Traitor be apprehended, arraigned, convicted, and condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and look for nothing but present death, and execution, and yet for all the sentence pronounced unto him, that he should dye, would fall to eating and drinking (as the world goes now) rather than to pray, and repent him of his wickedness ; thinking only to riot and revel, to chear his heart before he depart this world, would not all men say he was a mad-man, and out of his wits ? This is the case of all lewd men, they already are condemned, they want nothing but execution, and lye in danger of Hell-fire : Alas, what cause have they to be merry, but rather mourn and grieve ? therefore their mirth is but madness.

Jam. 4. 9.

Seeing then we can have no peace of conscience, nor any sound comfort, until we have the feeling of God's love, and full assurance of the remission of our sins, let us never give any rest to our souls, until we have repented, and got some blessed perswasion of the Almighty's love in Christ ; and some warrant from the Spirit that our sins are done away ; for the Kingdom of the Lord stands.

Uſi. 3.

Rom. 14.
17.

stands not in any outward things, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Alas, if any of us were condemned to Death, lying in Prison, looking for nothing but present execution, what could do us good? There were then no joy in Wife, nor children, lands nor livings, meat nor musick; No, no, unless we have the King's pardon, we cannot be merry, but would contemn all those things: Even just so, when a poor sinner is arraigned, and condemned in his own conscience for his offences, hath no feeling of God's love and mercy for the remission of them, how is it possible that he should have one dram of joy, till the Lord in mercy seal to his poor soul a general pardon by his Spirit, dipped in the blood of Jesus Christ? Well then, let us never be at peace, nor give any rest unto our souls, until we have got a comfortable persuasion of God's mercy for pardon of our sins.

That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Second part of the verse.

These words contain in them the second part of this Verse; and is as much, as if the Prophet should have said, O Lord, I intreat thee for Christ Jesus sake, to forgive me my haimous and bloody sins, and give me the blessed assurance of the same in my soul and conscience; that so feeling and finding that thou art reconciled, and hast pardoned my sins, my soul which is wounded and overwhelmed

whelmed with grief and sorrow, as my bones and most strong parts are wasted and consumed, and my strength decayed, may be restored, cheared up, and gladdened.

By this speech he would shew his extreme grief, and sorrow for his sins, which was so extreme that it wasted, and consumed his strength, dried up his bones, and spent his marrow.

Hence we see, that there is no sorrow to the heart of God's children like that sorrow which is for sin, and offendeth our most gracious God and merciful Father. Great is the grief of an Husband, that loseth a kind and virtuous Wife : And who can express the sorrow of a Father, or Mother, for the death of their dear and only child ? But yet all the sorrow in the world is not to be compared unto the sorrow and grief of heart for sin : This will wound the very conscience, and cause much weeping and wailing, and great heaviness ; it will even weaken the body and strength of nature ; and if it be of any long continuance, it will waste the bones and consume away the flesh : *When I held my tongue, my bones were consumed.*

And the reason is this, because a poor sinner, being wounded in conscience for sin, and not feeling the love and mercy of God for pardon, sees nothing but Hell, nothing but damnation, and the wrath of God, which is a fearful thing ; For this causeth torments, and fears, and terrors, and makes even a Hell in a wounded conscience : And of all plagues and judgments, what can be more terrible and

Psal. 32.
3, 4.

Dol. 5.
No sorrow
in the god-
ly like the
sorrow for
sin.

Lu. 16. 2.
Psal. 32.
Psal. 6. 2.
Psal. 38.

Prov. 18.
14.
Heb. 10.
21.

Use 1.

and fearful, than to see the heavy weight and burthen of God's anger, which is unsupportable? For, as Solomon saith, *A man may bear his sickness, and infirmity, but a wounded conscience who can bear?* Again, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Seeing this is the woful fruit of sin, that it thus woundeth the conscience, and wasteth the flesh, and the bones; we see how God hateth sin even in his dearest children, so as if they will needs sin and rebel against God, they must feel the woful and terrible smart of it. And therefore, let us above all things shun it, avoid it, not dare to commit it: Oh, it will cost thee dear, it will make thy heart to ake, it will breed thee much woe and misery in soul and body.

Use 2.

We see the miserable blockishness of all carnal men and women, who are not ashamed to say, that they had rather deal with God than with men, for sin: But alas, they never knew nor felt the weight of sin, but if God should once open their eyes, and let them see their sins, and feel the weight of his anger for them, O then they will confess, *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God.* *If he be angry (saith David) blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*

Use 3.

Let us learn, that it is not some light sorrow, or small sigh, or, Lord have mercy upon me, will serve for our sins against God: No, no, let us labour to be humbled more deeply for our transgressions, seeing by them we offend a most merciful God; yea, if it were

were possible, to shed even tears of blood for our offences; for all were little enough to shew or express that grief for sin we should or ought to have.

Which thou hast broken.

THAT is, which thou, O God, my Lord, in justice hast justly inflicted upon me, for my great and grievous offences.

Hence then behold, that God is most righteous and just in punishing, and correcting the iniquities of men: He cannot wink at sin in any man, no, not in them that be dear and near unto him, as may appear in his holy Servant *David*, a man after his own heart, a holy Prophet of the Lord; yet, if he rebel, and play the wanton, he is sure to be scourged for it, as here in this place: So when he numbed the people; so *Hezekiah*, *Jerusalem* the holy City; yea, if the Son of the Almighty, which had no sin, take but our iniquities upon him, he must be punished, the justice of God will seize upon him. And the reason of this is manifest, because God doth so hate sin, that he cannot wink at it in any.

If the Lord doth so sharply and severely punish iniquity in his dearest children, whom he loves best, Oh then what will become of all those that are his enemies. If to the green tree, what to the dry? If judgments begin at the house of God, Oh then, what shall be the end of those that obey not the Word of God? If God do so severely han-

Dott. 6.
There is
no respect
of persons
with God.

1 Sam. 24.
Esay 39.
Mat. 23.

Vse. 4.

1 Pet. 4.
17.
Jer. 20.29

dle his own people, then much more the wicked and prophane ones.

May rejoice.

*Dott. 7.
'ardon of
in brings
true joy.*

Psal. 32.

*Rom. 14.
17.*

HENCE we learn, that there is wonderful joy and gladness, in the hearts of all those who have the pardon of their offences: It is a matter of endless comfort to feel the love of the Almighty in a man's soul; to know God to be my gracious Father, Jesus Christ to be my Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost to be my Comforter, it is matter of endless comfort; *Blessed is he whose wickedness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.* Again, *The Kingdom of God stands not in meat and drink, but in Righteousness, Peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

We learn hence, that such as continue in any known sin unrepented of, cannot look for peace from God; for where goes sin there goes the curse, *Isay 48.* *There is no peace to the wicked:* God doth even wage war, and enter into a combat against all impenitent sinners. This the Prophet speaketh, *Ps. 7.* God doth whet his Sword, bend his Bow, and make it ready against the wicked; and therefore, if we want this, and have not the feeling of God's love, and assurance of his mercy for the pardon of all our offences, O then let us labour for it, use all means to attain unto it, pray for it, and give no rest unto thy soul until thou hast it; and if thou hast it, Oh then make much of it, lose it not though thou mightest gain a Kingdom;

dom; for all the world will not afford one dram of comfort without it; and take heed of sin, which will drive it away, dim it, and damp it, and deprive us of the feeling of it.

We often see, that ungodly men offer great wrong unto the children of the Lord, Oh, say profane Beasts and Atheists, these Professors, these Puritans, they are always heavy and dumpish, there is no comfort, no joy, no true mirth in them, they are always sad and heavy. I tell thee thou art deceived, they have more sound joy, and true christian mirth, in one hour, than the wicked Atheists of the World have in a whole year. Yea, who should be merry, if the Children and Servants of God be not merry? Who can rejoice more than he that is the child of God, that feels God's love and favour in his soul, is a Member of Jesus Christ, and to whom there is no fear of condemnation;

It is true indeed, in regard of our sins and offences, we have cause to mourn and lament, yea, to weep, if it were possible, tears of blood; but in regard of God's mercy, in that we be reconciled to God, delivered from Death, Hell, and Damnation, by the Death and Merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour, in whom we believe, we can be merry, yea, rejoice in all estates, in sickness as well as in health; in poverty, as plenty; in Prison as in liberty. Look on Peter in Prison, Paul in the Stocks; whereas wicked men have only a carnal and worldly joy in their friends, riches, honours, pleasures, and delights, if

Use 2.

Rom. 8. 1.

they be gone and lost, and their joy lies in the dust, then they are dumpish, heavy, and sad; no joy then, no rejoicing, but a Knife, a Halter, a Pond; even become in a melancholy humour, their own Judg and Executioner.

So that by this we see a clear and notable difference between the joy of wicked men, and the joy of God's children: The joy of wicked men is carnal, and worldly, and earthly; the joy of God's children is spiritual, inward, and heavenly; theirs is only in time of prosperity; but the joy of God's children is durable, permanent, lasting for ever in Life and Death; whereas the joy of wicked men ends even in Death, and with horrour of Conscience.

VERSE IX.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

David
can no way
have peace
till his sins
be pardoned.

Parts of
the verse.

IN these words David doth, the third time, renew his former Petition and suit unto God for the pardon of his sins, as one wonderfully amazed, and cast down in the sense and feeling of God's anger for his sins.

And the request hath two parts: First, because he had provoked the Lord to anger, and was in danger of his displeasure, he intreats him to turn away his angry countenance from beholding his sins. As if he should have

have said, Oh Lord, I have committed great and grievous sins in thy sight, and given thee cause to be angry with me : But, Lord, I beseech thee cast away my sins out of thy sight, look not on them, neither call them to account, but put them all out of mind.

Secondly, he intreats the Lord to blot them out of his book of remembrance; alluding to them that keep a Book of debt, who write all down that is owing unto them, and in token all is discharged, blot and cross the book : So he requests the Lord to cross the book of debt, because he was not able to pay the debt ; therefore he requireth, that he would in the blood of the promised Messiah be content to blot the book of his account.

When as *David* prays to God, that he would turn away his face; that is, that he would not call his sins to mind to punish them, but forget and forgive them, and, as it were, cast them behind his back, as men use to do with things they will not remember ; Hence we may learn, that there is nothing so fearful unto us poor distressed sinners, as is the terrible anger, and frowning countenance of the most righteous God, which, if a man beholdeth, and seeth the Lord to frown upon him, it is impossible that all the creatures in heaven and earth should give him any comfort : No, *David*, a King, being in danger of his just anger for sin, could have no joy nor comfort until he was reconciled unto God, and did behold his loving countenance turned toward him, in and by the means of Jesus Christ, and through a lively faith.

Doct. 1.
God's anger
most
fearful to
the Godly

*1 Cor. 16.
5.
Psal. 5. 5.
Pf. 45. 7.*

Rom. 8. 3.

Heb. 10.

Mat. 5. 50.

Job 13. 15.

Psa. 6. 31.

Vse I.

And no marvel, though the Prophet intreated the Lord to turn away his angry face; for so the anger of God is most terrible, yea, more heavy than if a Milstone, yea, Heaven and Earth should be laid upon a man's soul : For, as St. Paul saith, *if God be with us, who can be against us?* so, if he be against us, who can be with us ? It is a fearful thing to fall into his hands. And if the wrath of the King be as the roaring of a Lyon, how much more is the wrath of God to be feared, who can cast both body and soul into Hell ?

Yea, so long as the children of the Almighty enjoy his favour, see his loving countenance, they are able to endure much ; though men torment them, persecute them, rail on them, they can endure much misery; but if once they lose the feeling of Gods love, and see his angry face, and frowning countenance turned towards them, Oh then nothing can comfort them, till they obtain his favour again. How many things did Job suffer without impatience, yea, the loss of all he had, so long as he felt the loving favour of God towards him ; but when he seeth the Lord to arm himself like an enemy, and like an angry God, then he was no longer able to endure ? and what can be more terrible to a poor sinner, than to wrastle with the anger of God, than which nothing is more fearful ? And this can every child of God testify in his own conscience by experience, fearing the heavy weight of the Lord's anger. Seeing it is so fearful a thing for man to provoke the Lord to wrath, and behold his angry

gry and frowning countenance ; This condemns the blockishness and senseless security in most folks, who, though they do nothing but sin against God daily, and so provoke him to anger and wrath against them, yet do not so much as say, *Alas, what have I done?* though they ly smoaking under the heavy wrath of God, to be destroyed for their sins.

Vers. 36.

Men fear the wrath and terrible face of great men, especially their Prince ; but hard-hearted transgressors fear not the wrath of the Eternal God. Well let all rebellious and stiff-necked men remember what Christ saith, *Fear not him that can kill the body, and can do no more ; but I will tell you whom you shall fear, fear him that can kill both body and soul, and can cast them both into Hell-fire ; fear him.*

Vie 2.

Because nothing moves the Lord to anger, and to be displeased with men and women but sin, therefore let us above all things shun sin, not dare to rebel against God, and provoke his wrath : *Your sins have made a separation.* Oh then, take heed of sin : And if thou wilt offend, be sure thou shalt find and feel the wrath of God ; and if thou wouldest escape the wrath which is so terrible, take heed of sin ; and especially, if thou hast sinned, not to ly and continue in sin : It is that which makes God angry, because we do not repent for sin. We see men be too careful to shun such things as offend great persons, and procure their displeasure, for fear if they take occasion against them, they'll turn them out of their Farms, rack their Rents, &c. Oh then fear to offend God, who will reject

Ila. 49. 2

and cast thee off for ever, and increase thy judgment.

Use 3.

If we have sinned, and thereby provoked the Lord to anger by our sins, as David did, and feel his displeasure, and see his frowning countenance; Oh then, let us give no rest unto our souls, till we be reconciled unto him, till we obtain mercy and favour at his hands: For so long as we see his anger and frowning countenance, alas, we can have no peace nor comfort in the World. If a man should have the favour of all men, great and small, Nobles, Lords, &c. yet if the King hate him, and cannot abide to hear of him, what good can all this do him? So, if a man had the favour of all men and Angels; yea, if it were possible, all the things on earth should seek to uphold a man, yet if God be angry, and displeased with him, his wrath would crush him in pieces. Well then, when we trespass against God, and so provoke him to anger, let us use all means to obtain his favour; let us repent of our sins, be humbled for them, acknowledg and confess them; let us pray for pardon, and intreat the Lord to turn away his face and angry countenance. And as we see, if a man offend a great person, he will ride and run night and day, send gifts, make friends, and all to obtain his favour again; even so must we seek for the favour of God. And as Absalom, having sinned against his Father, sent Joab, and the woman of Tekoa, to get his pardon, and to appease his Father's anger: So we must seek to Jesus Christ, to be our Mediator,

ator, to turn his Father's anger from us.

Lastly, seeing the anger of God is so fearful a thing, and so unsupportable, and the loving favour of God is Life it self, Oh then let us make much of God's loving countenance, and do nothing in word or deed that may turn his mercy and loving favour from us, but use all good means possible to continue the same ; for if we love him, he will love us ; If we honour him, he will honour us. It must be true obedience that we honour God with, for he is the searcher and trier of all hearts, whether they be right or no ; God trieth our hearts, that is ; our love ; he trieth our reins, that is, our sincerity. God knows our words and thoughts long before we utter them ; he knoweth the words of our Bed-chamber, which a learned Divine calls twinkling words, though but a whisper ; therefore David humbly desires that the Lord would hide his face from beholding his inquiry.

Use. 4.

Hide thy face from my sins.

THAT is, pardon them, and do not call me to account, to punish me for them. Moses saith, Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee, and our secret sins in the sight of thy countenance : That is, the Lord beheld their sins, that so he might punish them for the same. So when the Lord hideth his face from our sins, it is all one as to pardon them. Now sin is contrary to the essence of God ; and if we sin, then follows punishment ; for sin and

and punishment are unseparable companions. Sin is an averting of the heart from the Creator ; remove sin, which is the cause of punishment, and the effect will cease. A little Leaven doth leaven the whole lump ; so one little sin begets another, and one petty sin destroys the Creature. When a man casteth a thing behind his back, or turns his face from it, it is a sign he would forget it, and not remember it : Even so, when the Lord hideth his face from our sins, it is all one as to pardon them, as I said before. Again, *I will put away your sins, and scatter them as a mist,* saith the Lord ; and we know that mists that appear a little time, are by and by scattered and gone. *Hezekiah confesseth, That God did cast all his sins behind his back ;* alluding to men, who, when they purpose to forget, or not to remember a thing, turn their backs upon it. Again, *I will cast all their sins into the bottom of the Sea ;* alluding to Pharaoh, that wicked man, whom God drowned in the bottom of the Red-Sea. And thus we have the interpretation of the words.

Dott. 2.
Note how
God par-
dons sins.

Psa. 32. 12.

Here we see how, and after what manner the Lord pardons our sins ; namely, when he doth forgive and forget them, and turn his face from them, hath no purpose to remember them, or to punish us for them : And in a word, when he doth upon our true repentance, for the Merits of Christ, esteem sin, as no sin, as though it had never been committed ; when he covers them, and imputeth them not unto us. Indeed every sin that we commit is a falling from God, and a step from Grace.

See-

Seeing the Lord forgiveth sin after this manner, and even doth in mercy forgive and forget our sins, puts them out of his remembrance, casts them behind his back, and will never call them to mind any more : Here is matter of joy, and endless comfort to distressed souls ; if thou hast once repented of thy sins truly, and been assured of God of the pardon of them, though thou maist remember them, and thy conscience accuse thee for them, as *Job* and *David*, who were troubled for the sins of their Youth ; yet, I say, thou shouldst remember them. God will never remember them any more to judgment, or condemnation, nor plague, nor punish thee for them : He casts them out of his mind, and turns his face from them ; and therefore, if he once pardon sin, he pardoned it for ever : *For the decree and counsel of God is unchangeable, he alters not;* and therefore, if once he gives pardon for sin, he never revokes it, but loves to the end ; *The gifts of God are without repentance.*

Use 1.

Rom. 11.

19.

Seeing the Lord in pardoning of sins, doth turn his face from them, forgets them, and forgives them, and will never speak of them, nor call them to mind any more ; We learn hence, in pardoning of wrongs and injuries done to us, to imitate the example of God our heavenly Father, to pardon them so as we never call them to mind again, that we forgive and forget all wrongs and injuries, trample them under our feet. But it is a common speech of many ungodly men and

use 2.

and women, if any do them any harm or injury, they will forgive them, but they will never forget them; and accordingly so they deal, though for a time they can shew a smooth countenance, and give fair words, yet if ever they get them in their danger, they will fetch them over, they will shew their spleen and malice, and pour out all their poysom. But let such take heed, for how can they say, *forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us*, and yet do not forgive and forget wrongs? If the Lord should deal thus with us, he should confound us: For God is provoked by us every moment, and we are indebted unto him ten thousand Talents, yet he is intreated of us, and he is reconciled unto us; ought not we therefore to forgive one another, after his example? This is the reason used by the Apostle Paul, Col. 3. 12, 13. Now therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, put on the bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel to another; even as Christ forgave, even so do ye. It were woful with us, if God were not ready to forgive, for we find our selves ready to offend; and one sin unpardoned is sufficient to make us condemned. The second branch of the Petition is in the end of the Verse, in these words immediately following.

And

And blot out all mine iniquities, &c.

THAT is, blot them out of thy Book of Accounts, and that Bill and Debt-book wherein they seem to be written or engraven, for so much doth the speech import: The profit alluding to men that keep Books of Accounts, wherein they write all their Debts; even so the Lord hath, as it were, his Books of Accounts, wherein are Registered all the sins of men and women, when, and where, and howsoever committed.

First part
of the
Verse.

Then hence we learn, that all our sins are known to God, he hath them all (as it were) written down in a Book of Account, and unless they be blotted out in this Life, they shall one day be called over, even at the Day of Judgment, *The Books shall be opened*, and every man's conscience shall be a Bill of Inditement to accuse and condemn him. This is that which is told us by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, ch. 16. *The sin of Judah is written with a pen of Iron, and the point of a Diamond*. And *Job* hath it, *Thou hast sealed up our sins in a bag*. By all which places it appeareth, that all our sins are known to God, as perfectly as if they were noted in a Book; and unless we repenr, they shall one day be called over, and laid to our charge, when our Book shall be opened.

*Doit. 3.
All our
sins are
known to
God.
Rev. 20.*

Seeing that all our sins are well known to God, and the Lord hath them (all as it were) writ-

Use 1.

written down in a Book, and this Book shall one day be opened ; and if our sins be not blotted out before Death come, and this Debt be not cancelled, then they shall be brought to light, and we shall be cast into Prison till we have paid the uttermost farthing ; Then we see it stands us all in hand, while we live, to labour to have this Book cancelled, that our sins may be put out, and all debts crossed : For if they be found uncancelled at Death, and at the day of Judgment, If they be found then upon Record, surely then it is too late to look for mercy, or cry, *Lord, Lord, open unto us* ; and therefore it is a matter of endless moment, which we are all most carefully to think upon, that this Book may be crossed, and our sins cancelled, so that we be not in the great Day of the general Judgment called to an account for them.

But how might we do, that we might have our offences blotted out ? We are not able to pay the Debt, we owe the Lord ten thousand Talents, and cannot pay one penny ; what shall we do to have the whole sum paid ?

To this I answer : The Lord is like a merciful Creditor, if his Debtor be not able to pay, let him confess the Debt, and he will ask him no more, but will willingly and freely pardon all : So the Lord God, seeing that we are by no means able of our selves to pay the Debt, yet if we confess it, and desire pardon, he will forgive it. And yet, because he is just, as he is merciful, therefore

fore we must needs look for this, that his Justice should be satisfied, and that is done by the means of his Son Jesus Christ ; he is become our surety, he is content to take our debt on him, to become Pay-master, and so, when nothing else could do it, he was content to suffer Death, even the cursed Death of the Cross, and to wash away our sins by his own heart blood.

So then, we see the means how our sins are blotted out : Namely, when we do but repent of them, bewail them, be humbled for them, leave and forsake them, lay hold on Jesus Christ, and apply unto us his death and Passion ; then by the blood of Christ all our sins shall be washed away.

VERSE X.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.

David having hitherto craved at the hands of God pardon of his sins, doth here put up a new Petition to God ; namely, for Regeneration, or the new Birth, That God would cast him in a new mould, and make him a new man : And that God would in mercy go forwards with the blessed work of Sanctification begun by his Spirit, and now is interrupted by his sins.

Our reconciliation with God stands in two parts : Namely, pardon of sins, and re-

gene-
David's
new Peti-
tion.

generation. And *David* having in the former Verse, prayed for grace and mercy, that God would have mercy upon him, pardon his sins, and wash them all away in the blood of his Son : Now he doth beg for Regeneration, and increase of the blessed Work of Sanctification, which is begun, and continued by the holy Spirit of God : For though the Lord shall pardon sins past, yet if he gives not power against sin for time to come, we shall marr all quickly, and commit either the same again, or else some greater sin ; therefore he craveth power against sin for time to come, that he may not fall into the like again.

Parts of
this verse.

In the tenth Verse, there be two things to be considered : First, he craveth a sanctified heart, because till the heart be pure, no good motion can proceed from thence, no more than sweet water from a bitter fountain : Secondly, he prays for the renewing of the work of grace, or new-birth, and Sanctification, which he had by his sins hindered, yea, greatly interrupted ; that so his soul and filthy heart being renewed and sanctified, thence might proceed good affections, and holy actions, with continual and constant obedience.

Doct. I.
Justification and
Sanctification go
together.

Whereas the Prophet joyns his Petition of Sanctification unto the former of Justification ; we learn, that these two graces of God's Spirit, Justification, Pardon of sins, and Sanctification, a godly life and conversation, are so knit and united together, that they cannot be separated ; so as no man is truly

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truly justified by Faith in the blood of Christ, but he is also sanctified by the Holy Ghost : No man can have the pardon of his sins, but he must become a new creature in Jesus Christ. And this appeareth very plain by St. Paul, Rom. 5. ch. (treating of Justification) verse 4, 5. and treating of Sanctification, he shews, that these two go ever together ; so as he that is not sanctified, is not justified ; and he that is not regenerate, and born anew by Faith in Christ Jesus, and the work of the Spirit, cannot have remission of his sins.

Seeing justification and pardon of our sins, and sanctification, and newness of Life, cannot be severed in the children of God, no more than fire and heat ; then men had need to take heed, lest they deceive themselves while they say, *God is merciful, and they hope all their sins are pardoned in the blood of Christ.* But unless thou be truly sanctified, unless thou be a new creature in Jesus Christ, thou canst have no assurance of thy justification, and pardon of thy sins : and therefore, if thou live in sin, delight in sin, have no change, no new birth, no reformation of thy heart, certainly thou hast no remission of thy sins as yet, and thy hope is but a foolish and a vain fancy of thine own heart.

Hence we learn, to try the assurance of our Salvation by the fruit of our Sanctification : For hereby we may assure our selves that we are justified, if we lead a sanctified Life. If we have our conversation in holiness,

ness, we shall then have in the end everlasting life. 2 Tim. 2. 29. The Apostle sheweth there, That the foundation of the Lord stands sure, so that the Lord knoweth who are his. He sheweth also how we shall know that we are the Lord's, even by this, every one, for his own assurance, must depart from iniquity ; and this is confirmed by that of St. John, 1 Joh. 10. 6. 7. If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. Oh then, as we glory in the name of Christians, and would be accounted Christ's, let us be careful to bring forth the fruits of Christians, and to lead a sanctified Life ; for God hath joyned these two together, so that not all the wit and policy of man whatsoever, is able to separate them.

Create in me a clean heart:

Dott. 7.
Gen. I. 1.
Repentance is a
new creature.

TO create, is to make a thing of nothing, as God created the World ; that is, he made all things of nothing. Hence then learn, that it is as great a work to create a new heart, and so to save a sinner, as to create the whole World of nothing, yea, in some respects it seems harder : For in the creation of the World, the Lord but spake the word, and all was made, there was no hinderance, no resistance, or opposition ; but in the Creation of the heart anew, there are many lets and hinderances.

First, within a man ; every man is an enemy to his own Salvation, and the Flesh resists

resists this same work : Again, the Devil doth labour to hinder, by all means possible, so great a work.

Yea, and besides that, it is a great work to create in a man a new heart. It is also a work of great difficulty, not accomplished without great labour and pains, and therefore it is called a Birth, a Death, a Circumcision : So then, even as no Birth, no Death, no cutting off the Flesh, can be without pain and sorrow ; so the conversion of a sinner is not wrought without pain and sorrow, The Infant is not delivered out of its Mother's womb without pain ; and dost thou think (O man) to part with the sin which is in thee, was conceived with thee, and which since thy birth-day unto this present, thou hast nourished with such delight, and not to taste of pain in the new birth ? No assuredly, it will not be, but it will cost thee much sorrow, many a sigh : yea, and tears themselves, before thou hast the same wrought effectually in thee.

Seeing it is so hard a thing to have a new and sanctified heart, even as to create the whole world, than he had need to take the greater pains about it, to use all means that God hath appointed : Namely, the Word preached, the Sacraments, Prayer, Meditation in the Law of God, and to cry unto God for the same continually.

We see that there is nothing in man of himself that is pleasing unto God ; for David prays to have a new heart created in him ; and therefore there is no Will nor Motion

vñ 1.

John 17. 17
Act. 15. 9.

vñ 2.

Motion in any man of himself to please God, all must be new, yea, till the heart is created anew and sanctified, it is a sink of sin and all uncleanness; full of polluted lusts and concupiscence, and therefore no freedom of will to anything that is good, till God create this new heart.

Use. 3.

Seeing David prayeth to God to create a clean heart within him, it must admonish us all to look unto our hearts that they be clean; for it is the Fountain of all Life and Motion. Now such as the Fountain is, such will the water be; such as the Root is, such will the Fruit be; and if thy heart be evil, it will send forth filthy lusts and desires. And, as our Saviour saith, *Out of the heart cometh evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, false testimonies, slanders;* these are the things which defile the man. Oh then, let us look unto our hearts, and labour for sanctified hearts, intreat the Lord to create them in us, and to take away our stony and corrupt hearts, and to give us good and honest hearts, sanctified by his spirit; for look how our hearts be, so will our thoughts, words, and works be: A good heart will have good words, and good deeds: but a stinking and corrupt heart will send forth vile and filthy words.

Mat. 15. 29
Luk. 8.

Object.

Answe.

Quest. Doth David desire no more at all but a clean heart? hath he no care of his words, and of his actions, of his outward life and conversation?

Ans. Yea verily, David, though he names but the heart, yet understands the whole man both

both outward and inward ; but because that is the Fountain of all, therefore he names that ; and if the heart be pure, it will make the whole man good : For the heart of a man is like the great wheel of a Clock, it is the first mover either to good or ill.

Hence mark, that in true Sanctification, where the work is truly wrought, it is not only outward in word and deed, but it is inward, and of the whole man ; both body and soul, heart, will, judgment, affection, conscience, words and works. *The God of peace sanctifie you throughout :* So that the mind, which by nature is full of blindness and ignorance, is enlightened by the true knowldg of God, revealed in his Word ; the Will liveth evil, and embraceth that is good ; the affections are purged from Rebellion ; yea, every part and faculty both of body and soul is sanctified ; *So that as we have given up our members servants to unrighteousness, to work sin ; now they become servants of righteousness to holiness :* Yea, the Body is now a fit Temple for the Holy Ghost, fit to perform all duties to God's glory, and the edifying of our brethren. And therefore this must be remembred, that he which is truly sanctified is wholly sanctified throughout in soul and body.

This shews, how thousands in the world be in a miserable case ; for (alas) they seem to be religious, and yet are not truly sanctified, for they live in some sin or other : With Herod they cherish and nourish in their bosoms many sinful and rebellious lusts and de-

*Doct. 3.
True sanctification
is never in
part.*

*1 Thes. 5.
13.*

Rom. 6.10.

Use 1.

*Mar. 6. 2.
Note this
well.*

Jam. 1.

Use. 2.

Notes to
know
whether
this change
is wrought
in us, or no.

I.

Rom. 7.22.

desires. Well, if thy tongue be not sanctified to cease from ill words, and to speak well; if thy hands, or eyes, or ears, &c. if thou be not sanctified throughout in every part, there is no true work of Grace, no sound sanctification; for where it hath true operation or working, there will be a change in all parts and powers of the soul and body.

Let us labour to be assured of this blessed work of Sanctification, in that we perceive our selves purged throughout our Minds, Will, Affection, Reason, Conscience; our Tongue, Hands, Feet, that we deny any service to sin and Satan, and do willingly consecrate all to God: For if we keep one part, and neglect another, it will profit no more, than to set a strong defence at one part of a Castle, and neglect the rest; or to shut one Gate, and let the rest stand wide open.

Now, that we may the better discern our estate, whether the sound work of grace be wrought in us, or no; and whether God hath sanctified our hearts truly, or no: we shall know it by these three fruits of Sanctification, which are ever found in all them that be truly sanctified.

First, a detestation and earnest loathing of our former sins, in which we have delighted and taken pleasure in, with an hearty love of righteousness and holiness, and newness of Life: So as we are loath to offend God in any thing, and are most careful to please him in all things; when as we carry a purpose not to sin, but can say, I delight in the Law,

Law

Law of God in the inward man, though we fall by the infirmity of our own flesh.

2.

Secondly, when we find in our selves, that from this love of that is good, and hatred of evil, we find an earnest desire in our hearts to embrace the one, and to fly the other; so that from this desire there arises a settled purpose in heart, and a careful endeavour in Life, to mortifie our corrupt nature, to subdue the flesh, and in time to come to frame our lives in all things according to the rule of God's holy Word: And that we not only desire this, but use all the blessed means, as the Word, Sacrement, Prayer, and Meditation, to perform it.

3.

Thirdly, another fruit is this: Namely, when as we find in us this desire, (to do well, and purpose, and heartily endeavour to kill sin, and to live to God) 'tis hindred by our spiritual enemies, the Devil, World, and the Flesh; that when we find a grief of heart, a spiritual combat between the Flesh, and the Spirit, whereby we strive and struggle to prevail against our spiritual enemies, and to overcome them; Then there is wonderful peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Well then, let all men try themselves, whether God hath by his Spirit truly wrought the work of Sanctification, or not: First dost thou hate thy former sins, and loath them as bane and poysen, yea, as the Devil himself? And doth thy heart love Heavenly duties, Holy and Righteous, which before thou foundest bitter? Secondly, dost thou desire

desire and endeavour to kill thy corruptions, to subdue and mortifie thy lusts and desires? And dost thou endeavour to frame thy life according to the Rule of God's holy word, and makest that thy only guide? Thirdly, dost thou grieve at thy faults and infirmities, shunnest the occasions of sin, and dost wrastle against all the temptations of Satan? And dost rejoice in nothing more than to prevail and get the victory? These be good signs and fruits of Sanctification; but, be they wanting, thou canst not be assured thou art truly sanctified, or hast any true work of grace as yet begun in thy heart. A sinner's conversion must be true and firm; not for a little, or small space; but dally and hourly. Our actions of Repentance must be renewed continually; *Naaman* must wash seven times in *Jordan* before he can be clean; we every minute sin, and therefore the greater need we have to repent; and weep as often; God requires an Universal Reformation; then Repentance is happy, when it hath been as large as our transgressions.

For exhortation.

Our heart, that little member, must be washed, and purged, from murders, thefts, and adulteries. *Pilate* he used an outward and a dissembling kind of washing, when his heart condemned Christ: But let us wash our eyes from lusts and desires of the flesh; our tongue from unclean speeches; our heads from plots of device; our hearts from pride and envy: All sins are spots and blemishes, no sin must be left unwashed: We wash daily, but we do not wash all; we must wash our affe-

affections daily, and then we wash as we ought: We must give the Lord present obedience: Let us not venture to sleep till we have washed and cleansed our hearts, and cast up our reckonings with God, for the day past; for the most righteous man that liveth sinneth seven times a day; and therefore ought not we to take an account of our actions and words in the day; as well as we cast up our takings in the Shop-book, what we have sold and got in the day? O let us by all means take heed, in not having our hearts here with David, purged and washed; lest snatched away by Death on a sudden, like ~~Hinck~~, and like ~~Zimri~~ and ~~Cosby~~, we be killed in the very act of our sins. Therefore let us desire the Lord so to prosper our intentions, that we may daily wash ourselves with true Repentance; saying, with David.

Create in me a clean heart, O God.

Hence we learn who is the Author of this work of Sanctification: Namely, it is the proper work of the third Person in Trinity, the Holy Ghost; he doth sanctifie the Elect: *The very God of peace sanctifie you throughout.* The faithful are begotten, *Not of flesh and blood, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

This work of Sanctification cannot flow from our Parents; *For who can bring a clean thing out of filthiness?* The new birth is not of blood, nor of the Will of the flesh, nor of man, but of Christ, *Who is Cor. 1. 30. is made*

*Doct. 4.
God the
Author o
Sanctifica
tion.
1 Thes. 5
23.
Joh. 1. 13*

Ezek. 36.
26.

made unto us Sanctification. Col. 1. 19. in him are hid all the treasures of it. John 3. 16. Of whose fulness we receive grace for grace.

Again, it is said, *A new heart will I give them, and a new spirit. will I put into them; And I will take away their stony hearts, and give them hearts of flesh: God the Father sanctifieth in giving his Son Christ unto us; so Christ sanctifieth in washing us from our sins in his blood; and the Holy Ghost in applying Christ Jesus his death and Resurrection, to us: And thus the work of Regeneration, or Sanctification, is by God wrought alone in the Elect. God created man without his help; but he will not save us without our help; and the Reason is good, because he hath given man the means and ability to step forwards towards Salvation; and that man that doth not go forward, goes backwards.*

Well then, this shews that man hath no freedom of will in heavenly things pertaining to eternal Life, but all is of God; Faith, Salvation, Life eternal, all comes from God; and therefore let us use all good means appointed of God, and seek this at his hands, who alone can, and will do it.

Now follows the second part of the Verse: *And renew a right Spirit within me: Where David craves grace from God to become a new creature, and withal, that God would enable him by his Spirit to be faithful and constant in time to come; and therefore requires of God a stable mind, a firm spirit; that is, not only a constant purpose to walk uprightly with God, but power and strength*

from

2 Part of
this verse

from his Spirit to become faithful and constant, as fearing his own weakness, if the Lord should leave him to himself ; for as God gives grace to obey, so he must give grace to persevere. As if he should have said ; O Lord, thou hast begun this blessed work of Regeneration, and new Birth, by thy holy Spirit ; But I, like a sinful wretch, by Sin and Rebellion have hindred the same, and broken off the gracious work of thy holy Spirit : Now, I beseech thee, O Lord, lay to thy hand again, and afresh begin to renew the work of thy Spirit, even the blessed work of the New Birth ; and withal, grant that, in time to come, I may be strengthened in the inner man by thy holy Spirit, and may be made thereby firm and constant to continue; yea, to grow, and hold out to the end, in holy Obedience.

Mark, that David acknowledgeth he had broken off the work of God his Spirit in him, and interrupted the same, and hindred the work of Sanctification by his sins, and disobedience. And therefore we learn, that after God hath touched a man's heart to repent, and sanctified him by his Spirit, if he sin, and rebel against God, he doth what lies in him to cut off the work of Grace, and to hinder the work of his Salvation, and break off the gracious work of Sanctification and new Birth ; and if the Almighty should leave him, he should fall clean away from Grace : For the Spirit of God is glad, and joyful, when as we are careful to avoid all those ways which offend God, and wound

Doct. 5.
The sin of
manbreak-
off the
work of
Sanctifica-
tion.

Eph. 4:30.

V&I.

our souls; when we seek to have good hearts, faith unfeigned, and a good conscience, then the Spirit of God doth daily proceed with the work of the new Birth and Sanctification; but after we rebel against God, and commit sin, we grieve the holy Spirit of God, and vex him, that he is compelled by our lewdness to leave off the work in the midst, because we suffer not our selves to be wrought upon, but we will follow our own lusts and liking; and when the Spirit of God ceaseth to renew us, and to beget our hearts to God, then there ariseth blindness of mind, so as we cannot conceive and feel the love of God, as in *David*: And then this gracious work of the Spirit being interrupted, there arises grief and sorrow of soul and conscience.

Well, seeing this is the fruit of our sins against knowldg and conscience, they hinder the work of Grace and New Birth, and interrupt the blessed work of Sanctification, begun by God's Spirit, and bring blindness of mind, and hardness of heart: Oh then, let us take heed of sin, intreat the Lord that he would give us grace for ever to hide his Word in our hearts, that we might not sin against his Majesty, and that he would not leave us to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, but that he would rather continue his love and mercy unto us, and that his holy Spirit would daily proceed with the blessed work of Sanctification, and renewing of our souls unto Holiness and Righteousness.

So often as we be tempted to sin, let us remember, that if we yield unto it, we shall hinder the blessed work of God's Spirit, hinder our new Birth and Sanctification, and thereby do what lies in our power to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and cause him to leave off the happy work of Regeneration.

Use 2.

When David intreateth the Lord that he would renew a constant and stable Spirit in him ; he shews, that he was greatly afraid of his own weakness, and therefore desires strength from God to hold out and persevere in Obedience even unto the end : That God would by his Spirit give him a constant purpose and continual endeavour both in heart and life to do his Will ; and therefore we learn from him to suspect our selves, to fear our own weakness and infirmity, if the Lord should leave us to our selves : Blessed is the man that fears always ; but he that hardneth his heart shall run into all evil ways. For such is our weakness, that we are ready to fall into the self-same sin from the which we are escaped, if the Lord do but a little leave us to our selves ; This doth the Prophet teach, Ps. 78. How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the Desert ? Thus did Pharaoh ; Exod. 9. 27. I have sinned, and the Lord is righteous, but I and my people are sinful. But when the judgment was removed, his heart was hardened again, and he continued in his sin : We see this in the example of the Israelites, Jud. 3. They commit evil again, and again, they fell into Idolatry, they knew it was a sin, yea, and they had experience

Use 3.
Good to
fear our
weakness.

Pro. 18.
14.

rience of God's severity against it : For all that, they fell again into the same sin, and so provoked the Lord to punish them. So, *Hab. 6.* Many sin again after the receiving and acknowledging of the Truth. So that, except the Lord uphold, and stay men back, they will fall into the same sin they before committed, and so provoke the Lord afresh to punish them.

Oh then, let us fear our weakness ; if *David*, a worthy Prophet, a man after God's heart, prayeth thus, *That God would establish him with his free Spirit* ; that is, give him a constant purpose and endeavour to continue in Obedience, how much more have we need to do the same, knowing how weak we are, how many enticements we have to sin, how cunning the Devil is, in using the World and the Flesh, as so many enemies, to fight against us ? Well, let us fear the worst, and doubt our weakness, and it will make us more careful to avoid sin, and the occasions of sin ; for seldom shall a man fall into that sin which he doth truly fear to commit.

As we are to fear our own weakness, and infirmity, so we must intreat the Lord that he would never leave us to ourselves, but that he would give us his stable and constant Spirit ; or, as *Paul* prays for, *That God would strengthen us by his Spirit in the inner man*, that he might not only begin well, but continue, by constant perseverance, in Obedience all our days : For if the Lord leave us, alas, we shall easily fall flat to the ground. Even as a staff in a man's hand, so long as it is

is stayed, it stands, but if it be left alone, it falls to the ground; so it is with us, and therefore let us not presume of our own strength or power, but suspect it, and pray to God to renew his constant and stable Spirit in us.

Here is matter of great comfort to the children of God, that fall of weakness and infirmity to the same offence after Repentance, and such is the depth of Satans temptations, that he tells them, that the Children of God fall not into the same sin again after their Repentance: If they do, he then telleth them, that there is no place for a second Repentance: But this is false, for the promises of God are, without limitation of times, or consideration of sins, or respect of persons: He will receive to his mercy all repentant sinners, whether their sins be committed before or after repentance, whether once or often; so that they renew their Repentance according as they have sinned anew. This pardon Christ himself publisheth, Mat. 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that are weary, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you: Yea, the Lord enjoyneth us sinful men, Luk. 17. To forgive our brother seventy times seven times, if he turn again, and say, it repenteth me.* So that we see, this is a marvellous comfort to all such as groan under the burden of their sins, that have fallen through infirmity into one sin often; Let not such be discouraged, but assure themselves, that albeit, with Peter, they fal oftener, yet if with him they repeat truly, and weep bitterly for their sins, the

Use. 5.

Lord is merciful to forgive them their sins; not that we should live proudly, presumptuously, stubbornly, and obstinately against him, but if we fall through frailty : For Ps. 103. *The Lord knoweth wherof we be made, he remembreth that we are but dust.*

Dott. 6.
The child
of God is
not always
at oneslay.

When David prayeth to be renewed, and to recover his former feeling and comfort : Hence we learn, that the Child of God is not always at one stay; but there is an interchange in the Faith of a Christian man or woman ; sometimes full of comfort, joy, and peace in conscience ; and sometimes again heavy and sad, yea, full of sorrow and perplexity : Even as a man in an Ague, sometimes sick, and sometimes well ; and, as it is with Trees, sometimes Winter, and sometimes Summer ; This is the estate of all God's children, as David, Joseph, Hezekiah, Job, &c. And continual experience proveth this, that the estate of all God's children ebbs and flows, hath it's change : When as they walk directly and upright with God, then they have peace and comfort ; but when they start aside, and commit some sin, then they find torments of conscience, and grief of mind.

Use. 1.

This shews us what is the estate and condition of the child of God in this life : He is not here so sanctified, as that he feels no corruption of sin to hang about him ; but rather such a one as feels the burthen of his corruptions, hindring him in this his course of Christianity, under which he sighs and groans, labouring by all good means to be disburdened : Indeed it is a matter of great

com-

comfort, to feel the graces of God's Spirit, as Faith, Love, &c. but no child of God can always feel the comfort of grace, but, as fire that is raked up in the ashes, it is hid from his feeling for a time, but at length it will break out again, to his great joy and comfort.

Well, seeing this is the estate of God's children here, that sometimes they find great peace and comfort, sometimes great grief and sorrow, let us not be too much discouraged, but rather, when as by our falls and slips we have weaken'd our comfort, let us intreat the Lord to renew our comfort again; let us do as a poor Traveller, if he miss his way, and go out of it, he will hasten into it again, and trudge, and pluck up his heels to recover that he hath lost: So let us, when we have sinned, and gone out of the way, make hast to return; and as a man that hath been long sick, being grown feeble and weak, he will use all means to gather up his crumps, and to recover his former strength again: So let us, when we have lost some part of our comfort, and heavenly strength: Let us (I say) use all blessed means, to recover our former health and comfort again: let us pray much, read much, hear often, and meditate much; let us bewail us of our former sloath, and make more upright steps in time to come to God's Kingdom.

Note hence, That it is the special fruit and mark of a sanctified heart, and of the mind renewed, to have a right Spirit; that is, a purpose not to sin, but in all things to please

Vse. 2.

Doct. 2.
A purpose
not to sin,
the mark
of a sancti-
fied heart.

Ps. 50. 17.
Mar. 6. 2.

Gen. 17. 1.
Ps. 18. 23.
Joh. 3. 9.
Gen. 39. 9.

Vse. 2.

God, and to do his Will, to walk with God in all his Commandments. Whereas, on the contrary, when a man hath a purpose to live in any known sin, it is a fearful and manifest sign of a naughty and wicked heart; for when, the heart is truly sanctified, then will be wrought this right Spirit not to transgress in any thing; I do not say, that the man sanctified and regenerate doth not sin at all; but he hath no purpose to sin, no delight in sin, but beareth a constant purpose in all things to please God; when he can say, with David, *I have restrained my feet from every evil way*: Again, *He that is born of God sinneth not*, that is, with full purpose of heart, with delight in sin; and as they purpose, so they endeavour it, they are afraid, and suspect themselves, shun the occasion of sin, strive against their corruptions, and Satans temptations.

This Doctrine doth evidently convince the greatest number to be such as never had the true work of Sanctification wrought in them: Their hearts be not sanctified, their minds be not renewed; Why? namely, because they want this mark and fruit of a sanctified heart: For though they hear of their sins, be told of them, and the fearful judgments of God denounced against them, yet they will not leave them, neither forsake them, but will continue in them; yes, though it cost them the loss of God's favour, and the endangering their own souls. Let us not deceive ourselves, let us try our hearts by this rule, whether they be sanctified, or no: Dost thou find

find a dislike of all sins, and an hatred of them? Hast thou a constant, and resolute purpose, by the grace of God, to walk before him all thy days? This is a sign of an upright heart, and that it is sanctified. And dost thou find no such resolution, no such purpose, but rather contrary, in a wilful manner to run on in thy old sins? thou wilt continue in them, let God and man say, and do what they can; in lying, stealing, drunkenness, whoredom, ignorance, contempt of the Word, &c. Say what thou wilt, confess what thou wilt, it is a clear case thy heart is naughty, it is filthy, not sanctified; for it is impossible that a man should have true repentance, and a heart truly sanctified, and yet have a purpose to live in his known sins. And therefore it convinceth all such as be impenitent, wilful, and notorious hypocrites and sinners; Yea, if they forsake many of their sins, and yet purpose to live in one, it argueth the heart is not sanctified: *Hast* left many, yet lived in incest, and the like.

This Doctrine may serve for the comfort of God's children, who are much grieved for their sins and infirmities, when they fail and come short of good duties, and sometimes start aside, as saith St. James, *In many things we sin all; and the just man sinneth seven times a day.* But if thou canst truly say, it is against my purpose, I hate the sin I commit, I condemn it, I had no purpose to do it, my desire was to please God, then thou maist have comfort, thy heart is sound, God will not

not condemn thee for it : *The Lord will spare his children, as a Father his only Son.* A child is going to School, and his purpose is so to do, in the way he falls into some company, and stays there too long, and plays the Treuant, but it is against his purpose : Even so the child of God purposeth to serve God, and to please him in all things, having no purpose to sin ; but by some temptations of the Devil, or allurement of the World, is overtaken ; *I do the evil I would not, I cannot do the good I would, but I delight in the Law of God concerning the inner man :* This is Paul's comfort ; and this is the comfort of all God's children, if they can truly say, *I do the evil I would not, I delight in the Law of God, that God will accept the will for the deed.*

Renew, or refresh a new spirit in me.

AS if he should have said, O Lord, I have (by my sins) dimmed thy graces in me, yea, even quenched, and extinguished them, and almost put them clean out; but, Lord, I beseech thee, renew thy graces in me, *Refresh me :* Even as we see a Lamp, when all the Oyl is spent, it twinkles, and is almost extinguished, till it be renewed and refreshed with Oyl, then it burns again, and giveth light.

Hence we learn, what is the cursed nature of sin, and the great power of it : Namely, it is as a pail of water cast on the fire, which if it do not quench and extinguish, and put all

Doct. 8.
Sin
quenches
grace as
water doth
fire.

all out; yet it allays the heat of it : Even so the graces of God's spirit in his children, alas, they be but weak, and small ; but sin is a pail of cold water, to quench the heat and comfort of them. *David* was went to delight in God's service, to be forward thereunto ; but sin did so cool him, that he could have little joy in it now : *Demas* was forward a while, but the World choaked him so, that he left Christ, and Christ bids the Church of *Sardis* to be awake, and to strengthen the things that are ready to die in them : And the *Laudiceans* grew neither hot nor cold, by reason of their pride and carnal security. So is the Church of *Ephesus* reproved, for that she had lost her first love. : So the Apostle *St. James* resemblmeth and compareth sin to Child-bearing, for, the fruitfulness of it : *Jam. 1. 15. Lust, when it bath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, it bringeth forth death, 1. Cor. 5. 6.* Likewise it is compared to Leaven, that leaventh the whole lump ; and therefore no marvel though it proceed by little and little, from one degree to another.

When we see some men who have been forward, and have taken delight in good things, now grow cold, and lose their first love, it is a flat sign that some sin or other hath stolen upon them ; they either fall in love with the World, delights, pleasures, profits, preferments ; or else security possesseth their soul, as pride, idleness, sloath, self-love, covetousness, pleasure, some sin or other hath bewitched them ; and therefore let all

Rev. 3. 2.

Rev. 2.

Vſe. I..

all such as find themselves thus decaying in grace, faith, comfort, care and conscience ; let them suspect themselves, and think all is not well ; let them search the cause of their decay, and it is sin ; some sin or other hath crept upon them.

Vſe 2.

How should this make us afraid of sin ; seeing it hath such woful effect ? which is, to quench the comfort and graces of God's holy Spirit in us : It blinds our eyes, that we cannot see what is good and evil ; it hardeneth the heart, that a man cannot relent and mourn for his sins, and be moved with the Almighty's Judgments ; It bringeth decay and eclipse of his graces : Men are afraid to do any thing that might hinder their health or wealth ; how much more the health and happiness of their souls ? Let us therefore always keep a diligent care over our souls ; let us seek to cut off all occasions to evil, and endeavour to stop the first beginning ; for the more sin groweth unto an heat, the more the Spirit of God is quenched, the work of grace is diminished, and the assurance of our comfort is weak'd and faiſen'd.

Vſe 3.

Rev. I. I.
2 Tim. I. 5.

When we find any decay in Faith, Love, Zeal, Knowldg, Repentance, Obedience, &c. Oh then let us labour to be renewed, to recover our former estate again. Do thy first works again, awake, and strengthen the things ready to dye. For, even as a spark of fire in ashes blown up ; so must we use all means whereby we may have the work of grace renewed in us.

I. We

1. We must attend upon the Word of God
preached; for as that is the means to beget
Faith, so it is to increase it, and renew it.

The means
for increas-
ing of
grace.

2. We must read and meditate much, call
our minds to account, and be sorry for our
decays, and labour to repair them; even as a
Ship when it leaks, or a City when the Walls
be battered.

3. We must (with *David*) pray often and
earnestly unto God to renew a right Spirit in
us, and a godly Spirit, that may be always bent
to the glory of God, and our own Salvation.

The spirit of Adultery may dwell in us,
as in *David*; the spirit of uncleanness, and
incest, may have possession of us, as in *Lot*;
the spirit of denial of our Master may have
place in us, as in *Peter*; the spirit of cruelty
and persecution may rage in us, as in *Paul*;
but not to have so much rule and predomi-
nance in us, as to keep out the grace of
God: For we may plainly see, that as soon
as God had given them the right spirit of
discerning, and the true spirit of knowledg
of their sins, they repented presently, and
became children of obedience, and worthy
instruments of God's glory. True it is, man
may fall, and sin, through weakness, and
frailty of his own corrupt nature, and yet
recover again by God's special favour and
grace: But if he recover again, and then
fall to sinning anew, it cannot be less than
presumption; for that man which is twice
a sinner, and but once a penitent, we may
say hath sins as red as Scarlet, and yet by
true repentance and amendment of his life,
may

may be made as white as snow, O my beloved, when God shall bring us to the pit, or brink of Death; O then shall we easily see, that sin, and the pleasure which we have taken in following and delighting in it, shall then prove a heavy burthen to us, which will so load our poor consciences, that we shall be ready to sink under the weight of it, if God's mercy be not shewn in our weakness: Will any man drink poison, because he will try an Antidote? commit sin, and then presume of God's mercy? God forbid! But let us so lead our lives here on earth, that we may, in the end of our days, enjoy Heaven for our reward: There is the blessed Consummation of all them who love the Lord Jesus.

VERSE XI.

Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me;

David, in the former Verse, had put up sundry requests and Petitions to God for grace, and mercy for the pardon of his sins.

Now this eleventh Verse containeth in it an earnest Deprecation, wherein the Prophet intreateth the Lord to turn from him two fearful judgments, and grievous punishments, which he had deserved for his sins. First, what greater misery can beset the child of God, than to be cast out of God's presence,

The division of the words.

sence, love, and favour? Secondly, what greater plague to a distressed soul, than to be deprived of God's blessed Spirit, whereby alone we are guided and comforted; and without whom we can have no comfort, nor ever do any good thing, but shall be carried of our own lusts head-long into all sin and wickedness?

Now against both these David prayeth unto the Lord in this Verse ; and herein he alludeth to the judgment of God upon *Saul*, who was his next Predecessor, and King over *Israell*, whom the Lord cast off, and did utterly reject from being King over the people, because he did reject the Lord, and cast off the Commandment of God, and would not obey his voice : And therefore the Lord took his Spirit from *Saul*, and gave him an evil spirit to vex and torment him. And both these David here prayeth against ; that Almighty God would shew him mercy, and not deal with him as he did with *Saul* ; though he had transgressed and offended grievously, yet that he would rather humble him by some other means, and not in his just judgment to cast him off, and reject him, nor take his holy Spirit from him. And as God doth bring coals to make his wrath hot, so must man bring tears, with Repentance. David knew, that from God all punishment did come ; and our perdition is from our selves, and by us all sin is committed ; and therefore he desires the Lord not to cast him away : Which is my next part to handle.

David al-
ludeth to
the judg-
ment of
God upon
Saul.

1 Sam. ■■■.
16: 14.

Cast me not away.

AS if he should have said, O Lord, howsoever I have sinned grievously, yet I pray thee, deal not with me as thou didst deal with *Saul*, that wicked man, to cast me off and reject me from being King, and Ruler of thy people : Nor take thy holy Spirit from me, whereby I am enabled to do thy will.

By the presence and face of God, is meant the love and favour of God ; and therefore *David* irreateth the Lord, that he would not thrust him clean out of favour, and deprive him of his love. Therefore let every man and woman never defer their repentance, but crave pardon for their offences, with *David*, saying, *O Lord, I have sinned against thee* ; casting thy self down at his mercy Seat, like the Prodigal Son, like another *Mary Magdalene*, like penitent *Peter*, desiring the Lord to have pity and mercy on thy sinful soul, not to cast it for ever from his presence ; but rather chaffise thee as a Son, but not to disinherit thee, and cast thee out for a reprobate.

Hence we learn, that it is a wonderful and fearful judgment, for a man or woman to be cast out of the Lord's favour, from his presence, so as he shall shew no favour unto us, but his disfavour, and wrathful countenance, it is a very heavy and doleful case. It is said of *Cain*, that God cast him out of his presence, and that was the height

Doct. I.
The pleasures of sin
are dear bought.

of

of Cain's misery. So the Lord cast off *Saul* from being King over *Israel*. As the favour of God is Life; so his dis-favour is Death and Hell: And as in the presence of God is fulness of joy, and pleasure for evermore; so in the want of his presence, there is nothing but woe and misery; yea, it is a step to eternal Death: Neither is there any misery which the child of God doth fear more than this, to be forsaken of the Lord Almighty, and to be cast out of his favour.

Seeing that it is so great and fearful a judgment to be cast out of the Lord's favour, and gracious presence, Oh what madmen be they, that make so light of God's love and favour; that will, for the gaining of a penny or two, or the enjoying of an hours pleasure, lose the love and favour of the Lord Almighty, and for ever deprive themselves of his glorious presence, and plunge both body and soul into everlasting woe and misery, with the Devil and his Angels.

Seeing the enjoying of God's presence is so happy and comfortable, and to be deprived of it, is so grievous and terrible, how should we use all means to get into his favour, if we want it, and keep it, if we have it? *In thy presence is the fulness of joy, and in thy Light we shall see light.* And because sin thrusts men out of God's presence, and separates between God and man; above all things take heed of sin, avoid it, and shun it, as the bane of our souls.

Gen. 4.

Use 1.
Their
madness
discovered
what make
light of
God's fa-
vour.
Mat. 16.
26.

use 2.

For

For the better opening and understanding of this Verse, we must discuss two great and weighty questions; which being well considered, will make much for the clearing of this Text.

Two Questions.

The former is this, when *David* intreats the Lord, *Not to cast him out of his presence*, that is, his love and favour; whether a man elected, and in the favour of God, as *David*, justified and sanctified, may lose the love of God, and fall away, to become a reprobate and cast-away, and so finally to perish?

The other question is, seeing *David* prayeth the Lord, *Not to take his holy Spirit from him*, whether the sanctified gifts and graces of God's holy Spirit may finally and totally be extinguished and taken away? These questions both be defended and affirmed by the Papists and their followers, who hold that a man truly elected, called, justified, and sanctified, and in the favour of God, may fall away and perish. We hold the contrary, that a man once in the favour of God, elected, called, justified, and sanctified, cannot finally perish, nor clean be bereft of the saving graces of the Holy Spirit.

Now, because these two questions be points of great moment, and on which all our happiness and comfort doth hang, and only depend, therefore I will stand a little to prove them by the Testimonies of Scripture, with Reasons and Arguments drawn from the written word of God, and remove some certain Objections of the Papists against the certainty of our perseverance in Faith to the end.

First,

First, that place of *Jerome*, where the Lord comforts his Elect, and chosen people, is most pregnant for this purpose : *Viz.* (saith the Lord) with an everlasting love have I loved thee, and therefore in mercy have I drawn thee : So that it is manifest hence, whom God loves once in Christ, he loves for ever ; and there is no time when he can be said not to love them : *For as much as he loved his own that were in the world, unto the end he loved them :* Where our Saviour Christ, to comfort his Disciples, tells them, that God the Father loved them that be Members of Jesus Christ, even unto the end, and his love shall never fail them. *The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* Now then, unless a man will say, that God doth repent of his calling, and electing men to eternal Life, it must needs follow, that they cannot perish whom God calls, and means to save : and our Saviour Christ saith plainly, that it is impossible, that any man Elected should perish. False Christs should deceive the very Elect, if it were possible, but that is impossible : And the gates of Hell, that is all the power and malice of the Devil shall not prevail against the least of God's children to hinder their everlasting Salvation.

Jer. 31. 3.

Joh. 13. 1.

Rom. II.

Mar. 24. 24

Ro. 8. 30.

Again, this is proved, *Mat. 16. 16.* where Christ promiseth Peter, and in him the whole Church, *That the gates of Hell should never prevail against him :* Where Christ shews, that indeed the Devil, through his temptations, might shew very much strength, but they should then comfort themselves in this, that he should never prevail, or finally get the

Victo-

Victory. Again, Mat. 24. *They shall deceive (if it were possible) even the very Elect.* Out of which words of our Saviour we may gather, that the Elect of God shall not be seduced, and so fall away finally. Again, Job. 10.28. Christ saith, *His sheep shall never perish;* adding this withal, *No man shall take them out of my hands.* And again, Rom. 8.30. *Whom he predestinateth, he calleth, justifieth, sanctifieth, and glorifieth:* Therefore shall not fall away finally : For he that falleth away finally, shall (assuredly) never be glorified.

But admit, (as the Papists would have it) that a man might fall away finally, then he must be clean cut off from Christ, and have no conjunction with him before he fall away finally : Then at the second re-uniting he must be baptiz'd, for Baptism is the Sacrament of Incision, or of grafting into Christ : But that is absurd, that Baptism should be any more than once administred ; therefore a man is but once united, or once ingrafted, and cannot be re-united, and never fall. And therefore frivolous is that distinction of Venial and Mortal sins, with the Papists : For if any sin of the Elect should be mortal, then there must needs be a second renewing of the Elect unto Christ ; which is most absurd to think, for the Lord worketh this but once : And David, though at this time he lay languishing under the heat of the Lords wrath, for those horrible sins of his, Adultery and Murther ; yet, in this Verse, he prayes not to have it taken from

All men
must put a
difference
betwixt
that they
feel, and
that they
have not
felt.

from him, which doth argue that he had a touch of it, even at this time of greatest extremity and misery, though he felt it not with the same measure of comfort he had done many times before.

Secondly, besides all these plain Testimonies of Scripture, let us consider a word or two, to prove, that in regard of God the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, the Elect cannot perish, and finally fall away.

First, if a man elected of God to eternal Life, called, justified, and sanctified, may fall away, and finally perish, then it is either because God wants love, or power to save him, but to say that God is unwilling, or unable, is mere blasphemy: Therefore all those which he Elects must needs be saved, seeing God doth both will it, and shew that he is able to effect it; first, if God be willing, and would save them, *Who bath resisted his Will? If God be with us, who can be against us?* but that he is most willing and able to save the Elect, it is manifest: For his Will, *God so loveth them, that he sent his Son to die for them.* Now this is a great trial and proof of his love and willingness, that he had rather see his only begotten Son, ~~that~~ was near and dear unto him, to be hanged on the Tree, to dye the cursed Death on the Cross, to shed his precious blood, and to bear the curse of God, and hellish Torments, than to see any one of the Elect perish: *And this is the Father's Will that bath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day,*

Rom. 11.
Rom. 8.

Joh. 3. 16.

Joh. 6. 30.

Se-

Isay 63.
John 10.
27, 28.

Luk. 25.
32.
John 17.

Ro. 8. 16.

Secondly, for his power, that he is able to save all those whom he will save, it is manifest; God is Omnipotent, and most righteous, and mighty to save, and the Lord doth what he will, *None can take them out of my Father's hands, who is greater than all.* And therefore, it appears, that God is willing, and desires that all the Elect should be saved; and hath not only decreed it, but sent his Son to save them.

Secondly, those for whom Christ dyed, and prayed that their faith might not fail, they must needs be saved, and their faith cannot fail; but he hath prayed for all true believers: *Father, keep them that thou hast given me, that they may be one in me, as thou art one in me.* Now then, if Christ's prayer be of force, and can prevail, and do any thing with the Father, (as he confesseth, that the Father hath, doth, and will hear him in all things) then certainly no true believer can perish, and finally fall away.

Thirdly, no true member of Christ can perish; for then Christ's body should be imperfect; but every true believer is a living member of Christ's body, and therefore cannot perish; yea, it is as possible that Christ himself should perish, as any true believer, that is truly ingrafted into his body, by faith and the Spirit.

Fourthly, in regard of God the Holy Ghost, who is the pledge and pawn of our Adoption and Salvation, the Seal of our Election, and doth testify God's love in Christ for our Salvation. Now then, unless we will say,

say, that the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of Wisdom, being of the very counsel of God, and the Spirit of truth that cannot lie, that he testifies untruth, that the believer that repents, and believes in Christ Jesus, shall be saved, and yet he shall not, which is Blasphemy; we must needs confess it is impossible: *He that is born of God cannot sin, (with full consent, to Death) because the seed of the Spirit remaineth in him.* And therefore I conclude, That the Child of God, Elected, Called, Justified, and Sanctified, cannot perish, and for ever fall away; cannot become a Reprobate, and Limb of the Devil, but shall continue to the end, and God will finish the good work of grace in him till the coming of his Son Christ Jesus.

This confutes that damnable Doctrine of the Papists, who hold all in uncertainty; yea, they teach, and hold, that a man truly Elected, may become a Reprobate; though to day a child of God, and highly in his favour, yet to morrow by thy sins thou maist become a Limb of the Devil, out of God's favour, in his displeasure, damned for ever; though to day a Member of Christ Jesus, called, justified, and sanctified, yet to morrow lose all, and be damned for ever; which indeed is the break-neck of all hope and comfort, if a man know not whether he shall be saved or not.

A marvellous comfort to God's children, if thou didst ever find the true work of Grace in thy heart, true faith, repentance, and newness of Life, assure thy self it can-

N not

I. Joh. 3.9.

Use 1.
Papists
Doctrine
against
the nature
of Faith.

Use 2.
Comfort
unto God's
children,
that grace
cannot be
lost.

1 Pet. 1.5.
Gal. 2.2.

Three ob-
jections.

Esa. 65. 5.

not ever be lost. God will finish that he begins; yea, the estate of God's children, now, is better than the estate of Adam in Paradise, before his fall; for then Adam stood by his own power, therefore might, and did fall; *But we be kept by the power of God unto eternal Life.* Secondly, the estate of Adam was mutable, by reason he had freedom of will, to stand or fall; but the estate of God's Elect is certain, and sure, in regard of God's eternal decree in Christ his death and passion, and the bond of the Spirit which cannot be broken.

But there be three Objections against this Doctrine, That faith can never be lost; or, an Elect child of God become a Reprobate. First, that God is said to be angry with his Children, and shew them his disfavour: Secondly, that they by their sins may cut themselves off from God's favour, and so lose eternal Life, and be damned: And thirdly, other testimonies of Scripture, which may seem to prove the same.

For the former, *Behold thou art angry, for we have sinned against thee,* so that it seemeth, that a man in the favour of God to day, may fall out of it, and procure his disfavour, anger, and displeasure.

Ans. First, that God is not angry, to speak properly, with his Children, but seemeth so to be by correcting and punishing them by judgments, and afflictions; so as a child thinks his Father is angry, because he corrects him: So do God's children; and indeed such

such affections do not agree to God's nature, to be like an earthly man's.

Secondly, I answer, that this anger of God is not an effect of his displeasure, or disfavour, but rather his love : And he corrects his children, not to destroy them, but to convert them, that he may save them ; as a Father his Son, whom he loves dearly.

Obj. 2. Where it is said, that God's children may by their sins break off God's love, yea, thrust themselves out of favour, and be for ever damned :

Rom. 8.

I Answer, it is false ; for they be kept from damnable sins, and God lets their sins turn to their good, for God doth ever give them hearts to repent : The sins of the godly, in themselves, deserve the everlasting curse of God, and eternal Death ; If so that Jesus Christ had not by his death and blood-shedding satisfied his Father's anger for them.

Objet. 3. David prays that God would blot them out of the Book of Life ; therefore it seems a man Elected may perish, and be damned ; for by that Book is meant God's Counsel.

3.
Psal. 69.
83.

I Ans. That David doth not read that ever the wicked had their names written indeed in the Book of Life, or were Elected indeed ; but only because they lived in the Church, were taken for Christians, and esteemed as written in the Book of Life, and therefore he prays the Lord to blot them out : That is, to make it known, that they were written in it.

Well then, certain it is, that no one Elect Child of God can perish, or be damned; but shall come to Life eternal, and be saved, because the Counsel of God standeth sure, and cannot be altered.

Instruct. Seeing this is so, that none that is the Elect child of God can perish; what a sweet comfort is this to all the children of God? For if ever thou didst Repent, and feltest the love of God truly in thy soul, and art justified, and sanctified, thou needest not fear, for surely thou shalt be saved: And this must be a sure stay to uphold our poor souls in all dangers and temptations. We are as strange Mariners on the Sea; there be great Storms and Tempests, great Rocks, and Sands. The Sea is the World, the Ship is the Church, Heaven the Haven; the Devil raiseth up many boisterous Storms and Tempests, to sink our poor souls into Desperation: Now then by Faith we cast Anchor upon the Foundation of God's Election, which cannot be removed.

But in this place, by *Favour, Face, and Countenance of God*, is meant that Favour and mercy of God, whereby God gave *David* the Kingdom in the stead of *Saul*, advancing him to be King of *Israel*, and God's Lieutenant on Earth that God would defend him, and keep him, to govern his people *Israel*.

Whereas *David* observed God's dealing with *Saul*, a wicked King, and how God plagued and punished *Saul* for his disobedience against the Word of God, and thereby is warned to take heed of the same Judgments.

Doct. 2.
The godly fear,
when they
remember
God's
judgements on
others.

ments of God, lest they fall upon him : We learn, that it is the duty of every man and woman, to observe and mark God's dealing with others, and his just judgments upon ungodly sinners, that thereby we may learn to fear the like judgments on our selves ; and it is a great point of wisdom to learn to be wise by other men's harms : And for this end the Lord doth plague wicked and ungodly men, that his Children might learn to amend. Even as we see notorious Malefactors are hanged on a Gibbet, that others seeing their shameful end might beware. The Lord having punished sundry Nations about his people, saith, *He thought they would have learned to fear God by their example.*

Well, seeing this is that God looks for at our hands, and which he aims at in punishing wicked men, namely that we should be warned by it, and take heed of their sins : Let us be wise, and observe God's judgments upon wicked men ; and when we see a wicked man punished, a murderer, a contemner, a blasphemer, a whoremonger, or the like ; then let us fear, if we live in the same sins, we pluck not down the same judgments upon us. And as *David* here calls to mind *Saul*, how he for his rebellion and disobedience was cast off from God ; so let us call to mind the spectacle of God's judgments on wicked men, and take heed of their sins, lest we taste of their plague and punishments.

We learn, that for sin the Lord doth deprive his children of his Favour, and as it were cast them out of his presence for a time :

Zep. 3. 19

Use I.

Doct. 3.
Sin takes
away the
feeling of
God's fa-
vour for a
time.

1 Sam. 15.
1 Sam. 3.
Dan. 4. 26.
Ester 3.
Use 1.

1 Sam. 2.3.

Use 2.
Folly of
worldlings
described.

time ; Thus we shall see, God hath spoiled men of great Riches and Honour, for their sins, and brought them to extreme shame and misery ; Look on *Eli*, and his two Sons ; look on *Saul*, that wicked King ; look on that persecuting Tyrant *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Haman*, *Achitophel*, &c.

This should admonish all men to take heed of sin, and rebellion against God ; for certainly the Lord will abase all such as be proud against him, he will cast them out of his presence, make their names to rot and stink in the sight of men : Those that honour me I will honour : but those that dishonour me, I will dishonour them, and therefore ; if you would not be dishonoured in this world, and provoke the Lord to cast you out of his presence, and favour ; Oh then beware how you sin and rebel against God ; for if thou be as dear to God as *Eli*, which was God's High Priest, yet he will bring shame upon thy head.

This shews the madness of those men and women, who desiring to enjoy the honours, riches, and dignities, profits and preferments, they take a most preposterous and very wrong course ; for how do men seek for preferment, honour, and promotion, lands and livings ? Namely, by oppression, bribery, usury, extortion, and the like. Now, alas, we see, that it is a vain course, and the next way to strip a man naked of all these things, and to bring him to shame and reproach, misery and poverty ; for sin brings all these things upon them.

But

But if you would come to honour, and dignity, riches and preferment, then seek to keep the favour of God, serve him, worship him, honour him, and he will honour them that do so ; and if thou seekest these things by wicked and unlawful means, certainly the Lord will cast dung in thy face.

2ly. When *David* prays, That *God would not take his holy Spirit from him*, he means not the essence of the three Persons, but his gifts and graces, the virtue of God's Spirit sanctifying his heart, and renewing of him. So then, if we understand these words, we must understand this Objection.

Quest. Whether that the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit, wrought in the hearts of God's children, can be totally and finally lost, as *David's* words seem to imply.

For the clear answer to this question, we must know, that the gifts of the Spirit be either temporary, for this Life, or else spiritual, for the Life to come : Now, of the former there is no question, but the temporary gifts of the Spirit may be lost utterly.

Again, the Spiritual gifts and virtues of the Spirit be of two sorts ; some common to the Elect and Reprobate, some proper and peculiar to God's Elect and chosen children. Now, concerning the gifts of God's Spirit, which be common to the wicked as well as the godly, to hear the word, to preach the word, and to do such like things, they may be lost.

Thirdly, The gifts of God's Spirit are such as are either essential to Faith, and

Graces of
God dou-
ble.

without which faith cannot be, or else the effects and fruits of Faith, which are not of the essence of Faith. Such gifts of the Spirit as be not of the essence of Faith, or absolutely necessary to eternal Life, the Lord doth sometimes take away for a time; as namely, the purity of a good Conscience, that inward peace which doth accompany it, the sense and feeling of God's love in Christ, and his special favour, cheerfulness of Spirit in praying, hearing and such holy Duties; joy in the Holy Ghost, patience, the gift of prayer, and such like; because the love of God, and the salvation of the faithful may stand without these for a time.

But to speak of the saving graces of God's sanctifying Spirit, as faith in God's promises, hope of Eternal life, affiance in God's mercy, through Jesus Christ, love of God, his Word, and Children, these graces can never be lost wholly: True it is, they may be lessened, and sometimes seem to be lost for the time; but yet certain it is, they cannot be wholly and finally lost; they may be as the Sun under a cloud, and as fire raked up in the ashes, or as the Trees in Winter; but they cannot be extinguished, lost, and taken clean away; but just as the Sun shines clear, the clouds being scattered, and the fire gives light and heat being stirred: so faith, hope, affiance, joy, comfort, peace of conscience, and the feeling of God's love, are renewed, and shew themselves clear again.

Use I.

Seeing that the knowldg and saving graces of God's holy and sanctifying Spirit can-
not-

not totally and finally be lost, this is matter of endless comfort to every true child of God in the time of temptation and grievous trial; for if ever thou fowdest and feltest in thy heart true faith in Christ Jesus, sound reparation, hope of eternal life, love of God; howsover these may be much weakened, and for a time in thy sense and feeling seem to be lost, yet they can never be taken away; yea, if thou dost carefully attend the means, as namely, the sincere preaching of the Word, administration of the Sacraments, continual, humble, and earnest prayer, the Lord will receive them, and renew them again.

This must serve to instruct and direct us how to judge of them who fall sometimes into pangs of despair; uttering words of desperation, that they are damned Persons and Reprobates, and cry out thus of themselves: Truly, if ever we saw in them the sound work of grace, and true Repentance, delight in the Word, care to lead a godly Life, love to God's children, &c. we are in Charity, to hope the best of them, to think that they belong to God, and that they speak they know not what of themselves; for they speak according to their present sense and feeling: When as indeed, in time of temptation, and trouble of mind, they be like a man that is grievous sick; he can relish no meat, every thing seems bitter unto him, because his mouth is out of temper; but when he comes to health, he judgeth otherwise: Even so these poor distressed souls in their trouble and affliction they speak they know not what

Comfort
to the god-
ly that can-
not be lost.

use 2.

not as their estate is in truth, but as they think it to be, according to their present sense and feeling.

Hence we see, what to answer to that Objection. That many men who have made a fair profession of the truth, had excellent gifts, and yet have fallen clean away. So Heb. 6. Such as be enlightened, have tasted of the Heavenly gifts, were partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted of the Word of God, and of the powers of the world to come; such men notwithstanding may fall away, and that finally:

I answer, That there is nothing spoken there of the true Work of Grace and Sanctification, of saving Faith, sound Repentance, hearty Obedience, and a new Life, but only of such common gifts as may befall a Reprobate; and therefore Saint John shews the cause why they fell away: Namely, they were never true and lively members of the Church, or of Jesus Christ; never truly ingrafted into his Mystical Body, they had knowledg, and were enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gifts and graces of God's Spirit, and had some glimmering of the joyes of the life to come, which the child of God enjoys; but the sound work of grace, a renewed heart, faith, repentance, obedience, and a sanctified life, was ever wanting, they were but hypocrites. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.

And therefore it behoves us all to take heed that we content not our selves with the com-

common gifts and mercies of the holy Ghost, which a reprobate may have : for it is certain, that excellent gifts will not avail a man to salvation, unless there be the true work of grace, saving Faith, sound Repentance, and hearty Obedience.

Mat. 7. 21.

VERSE XII, and XIII.

*Restore to me the joy of thy Salvation, and stab-
lish me with thy free Spirit.*

*Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked,
the sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

IN these words are contained an earnest Prayer of David unto God, for the renewing of God's mercy, and feeling of his love again, in the 12 verse. In the 13 verse he uses a Reason to move the Lord thereunto, namely, that if the Lord shall receive him into favour again, and testify his love unto him in the pardon of his sins, then he will not be unmindful of God's dealing with him, but become a preacher and proclaim-er of God's mercy unto others, to draw them to God, in shewing what God had done for his soul ; and so, that by the example of God's mercy to him, others should be won.

In the 12 verse he makes a twofold petition unto God : First, for the former feeling of an assurance of God's love and mercy for pardon of his sins. Secondly, that God would

Parts of
the verse.

would uphold him with his free Spirit, so as now being delivered out of the cursed thrall-dome and slavery of sin, he might cheerfully and freely serve the Lord, and run the way of his Commandments.

Restore me to the joys of thy Salvation.

No joy can comfort the soul, but the joy of God's salvation.

AS if he should have said, O Lord my God, I acknowledg and confess, that all the while I served thee, and lived in thy fear, and led a holy and godly Life, and kept an upright heart, that I found wonderful and exceeding joy in the assurance of thy love, and mercy in Christ, for my Salvation ; but since I rebelled against thee, and wilfully broke thy holy Commandments, I have deprived my soul of that heavenly comfort and consolation, and felt terrors and grief, fears and cares, and exceeding vexation : Now, merciful God, I humbly intreat thee to restore me again to thy joy and comfort, to assure me of thy love and favour, that thou art graciously reconciled unto me, that I may receive my former comfort ; and not only that, but because I see how weak I am, and have no power to stand without thy help and grace, I humbly intreat thee to stay and strengthen me, to establish thy grace in me, and so to uphold me in thy obedience, that I may freely and heartily obey thee all my days.

The child of God truly called, justified, and sanctified by God's Spirit, if he once sin against God, and provoke him to anger

*Doct. I.
Fruit of sin
described.*

Note.

anger by his wilful disobedience, doth feel exceeding anguish and sorrow of heart, great grief and trouble of mind, fears and cares, lest the Lord should reject him ; so that there is a Hell in his poor soul and wounded Conscience, till he be again reconciled to God by Faith and Repentance. So long as *David* walked with God in uprightness of heart, he had exceeding great joy and comfort in the Lord his God, was assured of his love for pardon of his sins, and eternal salvation ; but when he fell into Adultery, and Murther, and so rebelled against God, it is wonderful to see into what a gulf of misery he plung'd himself, what fears and cares, what doubts and troubles did vex his soul, and wounded his conscience. Even so it is with all the godly, while they have a care to fear their God, serve and please him, and keep an upright heart before the Lord, lead a godly and christian Life, they feel and find in themselves exceeding joy, and wonderful comfort, with assurance of God's love in Christ for their salvation. But if at any time they break out to sin, and rebel against God by wilful disobedience, then they shall find an Hell in their consciences, troubles, tears, and cares for the time. Who can tell what fears and cares *Peter* felt : What grief and sorrow of heart he was in, when cowardly he denyed his Lord and Master ? It cost him many a bitter tear. The Reason of this Doctrine is because all peace and comfort to a poor soul springs

Luk. 23.

springs from the sense and comfortable feeling of God's love in Christ Jesus for the pardon of sin and eternal salvation ; and therefore when that is lost, alas ! what peace or comfort can they have ? Secondly, they do by such wilful sin and disobedience grieve the Spirit, and make the holy Ghost sad within them, and so do what they can to expel the Spirit of God in them. Now, where the Spirit of God is made sad and grieved, how can there be any true joy ?

Vst. 2.

Seeing there is such sweet comfort in a godly and christian life, while we walk with God, and serye and please him in spirit and truth ; and when men sin and rebel against their God, they pull down upon their heads such woful miseries, troubles and cares ; How should this make every man exceeding careful of sin, which brings such woful miseries and judgments unto our souls, such torments, fears, and cares.

The joy of thy Salvation.

AS if he should have said, O' Lord my God, when thou didst assure me again of thy love and favour for the pardon of my sins, and eternal salvation, I had exceeding joy therein : Now I do humbly intreat thee to restore it to me again.

Dct. 1.
Favour of
God is a
christians
chiefest
joy.

Hence mark, what is the thing the children of God do most desire, and crave at God's hand, and wherein they do most rejoice ;

joyce ; namely, the favour of God, and assurance of his love, In and through Christ Jesus, that they know that God is graciously reconciled unto them, that they be in his favour, and shall never perish, but shall everlastinglly be saved. David was a King, and wanted no temporal commodity, pleasure, and delight whatsoever, wherein worldly men rejoice ; but he conceived no kind of joy at all in these things, to be out of God's favour : And therefore prays unto God for the feeling of the true joy, and that is, of His salvation, and that will minister unto him matter of true rejoicing indeed. Alas ! most men being carnal, desire riches, honour, pleasure, But, Lord, let me see thy loving countenance, thy favour and grace ; and that shall do me more good and comfort than all the things in the World. The poor Publican beggs for this; Lord be merciful to me a sinner. So Paul professeth of himself, that he esteemed of all things but as dung, in comparison of Christ Jesus, and the favour of God in him : and the reason is plain, because if a man had all the World, and wanted the love and favour of God, and were in his displeasure, and under the curse of God, what good could it do him ? Even as if a Subject should have ten thousand pounds, and yet the King cannot abide or endure him, but seeks his death. And therefore the child of God, if he were asked, what is the thing he most desires in all the World, would answer, mercy, and the love of God in Jesus Christ : He would despise Ho-

Pf. 4.6, 7.

Luk. 8.
Phil. 2. 8.

Mat. 23.26

Psal. 23.
I, 2.

Honours, Lands, Livings, Gold, Silver, Pleasures, and Delights, and prefer one dram or scruple of mercy, and the least drop of Christ's blood for Salvation, before all the World.

Use. I.

This may serve to reprove thousands in the World; carnal men and women, so they have the world at will, and may live at ease, eat, drink and be merry; they feel no want of God's mercy, no need of Christ's Blood, they esteem not God's favour and love, desire not reconciliation, but say, *Who will shew us any good?* Well, didst thou never feel the want of God's kindness and mercy? No hungering and thirsting after Jesus Christ and his righteousness? It is openly manifest thou dost not belong to God, thou wast never yet truly humbled.

Let this Doctrine admonish us all to labour with our hearts to be affected with this, namely, to esteem more of God's love and favour, and assurance of his mercy, than all the world; let us desire it more, let us rejoice more in it: So as if the question should be asked, What is the chiefeſt thing that thou dost most desire and affect, and what thou dost most delight and rejoice in, of all the things in the World, we may be able in truth to answer, and say with feeling and comfort, I desire nothing more under heaven then the mercy and love of God in Jesus Christ, to be in his favour, to be reconciled unto his Majesty, and with Paul, to esteem all things but dung in comparison of that. And till this be found in us

us in some measure, we can never find true comfort to our souls, and be assured that we have true saving faith in Christ. For this is a certain sign and note of an humble and believing heart, to hunger and thirst after God's mercy in Christ, and to esteem more highly of the least drop of Christ his precious blood for our salvation, then of the whole world, if it were offered unto us.

We must labour to manifest this our earnest desire and great account of God's mercy, by using all blessed means to attain unto it : we must repent and bewail our sins, leave and forsake them : we must embrace Jesus Christ by faith, and cry with tears unto God for mercy, Knock, seek, ask: and let us do as the men of Tyre and Sidon, when Herod took a grudge against them, and intended to make war upon them, they came all with one accord, and besought Blastus the King's Chamberlain to have peace. So, let us go unto Jesus Christ, the true Peace-maker, desire him to speak to God the Father for us, so that there may be an everlasting peace.

When David prayeth, that God would restore unto him the joy of his salvation, and those sweet comforts he was wont to feel and find in God's mercy, and feeling of his tender love in Christ; We learn, that the estate of God's children is not always alike full of joy, and comfort, and gladness ; but sometimes full of grief and misery, and cares and troubles : For the dearest children of God, who are replenished with the greatest

Vse. 2.

Mat. 7. 7.
Act. 12. 10Doff. 3.
The state
of God's
children is
not always
alike.

Luk. 23.

greatest measure of joy and comfort, in the feeling and assurance of God's love in Christ, when as the Lord leaves them to fall into some sin against Knowldg and Conscience, they shall find not only a great decay, but an utter loss of Joy and comfort for a time. Thus it was with *David*, who, though he was a man after God's own heart, enriched with great blessings, and spiritual mercies, most dearly beloved of God, sanctified in great measure; yet now having fallen into these two filthy sins, of adultery, and murther, see how he is perplexed, in great distress, and trouble of mind; and how the feeling of God's mercy, and joy in God's Spirit, seemed to be clean lost. So it was with *Peter*, and so it is in every child of God. Didst thou ever sin against knowldg and conscience since thou wast converted, thou didst find then a wonderful deadness of heart, trouble, and vexation of mind, and feeling of God's anger, with the loss of comfort for a time.

Seeing sins against Knowldg and Conscience wound the soul exceedingly, and also deprive us of the peace and comfort, and joy of God's Spirit, and bring terrors, fears, and gripings with them: Let us avoid, as all sin, so especially sins against knowldg and conscience, and labour, in all good things, in all places, and at all times, to live and walk so upright with God, that thou never hurt or wound thy conscience, though thou mightest get the greatest gain, honour, or pleasure; yet if

it be sin, and that against thy knowldg and conscience, abhor it, flee from it, commit it not, if thou lovest thine own soul. For if sins of ignorance shall not escape punishment, unless men repent, much more sins against knowledge and conscience, for these provoke the Lord exceedingly to turn away his favour from us, draw down his judgments upon us, wound our consciences, deprive us of the feeling of God's love and favour, bring trouble of mind, and a wounded conscience. O then, would you enjoy this great blessing of peace of conscience, which is a continual feast? would you be loth to lose the feeling of God's love, and comfort of his holy Spirit? Avoid all sins, but especially presumptuous sins against knowledge and conscience; they wound and hurt us, especially depriving us of all peace and consolation.

If the Lord should at any time leave us to sin, even presumptuous sins against knowldg and conscience, which is a fearful thing, yet let us not despair, with Cain, and say, *Our sins are greater than can be forgiven;* but flee to God's mercy, and there seek to renew God's love again, intreating the Lord to restore unto us the joy of his salvation and then we may obtain the favour of God, again, and renew the feeling of his love. Let us truly repent, and bewail our grievous and hainous sins, seek earnestly for grace and pardon, and give the Lord no rest at all, till we find that he be reconciled to us in Christ Jesus.

Mark

Doct. 4.
Pardon of
sin the
soundest
joy.
Phil. 3. 7.
and 8.
Luke 10.
20.

Mark (I pray you) what was the special thing wherein *David*, the holy servant of God, did rejoice; not in gold or silver, nor in pleasure and carnal delight, not in lands and livings, nor in his Kingdom; but in the Salvation of God, in his love, in pardon of his sins, and Salvation of his soul. So as hence we learn, That there is no true joy in any other thing in the world, but only in the mercy of God, and the salvation of our souls.

And indeed, what other joy can there be? for though the Lord should bestow on us all things which he hath made, with abundance of the things of this Life; yea, though with *David* we might command a Kingdom, yet unless, wthial, we have this comfort, that we are at peace with God, and have our sins pardoned, (alas) they would all prove unto us, as *Job's* friends, miserable comforters. But poor souls, many know no other comfort, but such as arises from temporal things, as Gold, Silver, &c. wherein they differ not from Beasts, which have their delight, as well as they, in those things which are fitting and agreeable to their nature.

Seeing *David* places all his joy and spiritual rejoicing in the Salvation of God; that is, in the pardon of his sins, in the feeling of God's love, and in the Salvation of his soul; therefore it shews, that there is no other cause of found joy but in this alone; so that if we have this, we have great cause to rejoice and be glad; but if this be want-

wanting, either we had never the feeling of God's love, nor assurance of salvation, or else have lost it; and therefore should use all blessed means to attain unto it again; for we cannot have one dram of saving comfort and true joy, but only in the favour of God, and the assurance of his love for our salvation.

This shews, that all the joy of wicked men, in all their sports and pastimes, is no true and solid joy, but a carnal joy, a swinish joy: For how can the heart of that man or woman rejoice, which knows not whether God loves them, or hates them, whether they shall be saved or damned, what joy can they have? It is madness rather than joy and mirth. David saith, that the wicked men joy in their *Corn, Oyl, Wint*, outward, worldly, and temporal things; but he despises the loving countenance of the Lord's favour and grace, which shall make him joy more than all they in their pomp and vanities. And then it will cause him to lye down in rest, peace, and safety; whereas the joy of wicked men is gone in a moment, utterly lost, and past recovery for ever.

And stablish me with thy free Spirit.

THIS second part of the Verse contains a prayer to the Lord for a new mercy, namely, the blessed grace of corroboration, to be strengthened in grace and obedience, and kept from sin by the grace and spirit of God in time to come. As if he should have said,

Vie 2.

Second
Part of the
verse.

Note.

said, O Lord, my God, I do not only pray for the pardon of my sins past, which are many and great, but I do humbly intreat thy divine Majesty to give me power, and to strengthen me against the like evils in time to come : For I know my weakness, and the wickedness of my heart to be prone to all sin by nature : and if thou shouldest pardon my sins past, and not prevent and keep me from sin in time to come, I should easily marr all, and run head-long into all sin. And therefore I beseech thy Majesty, stablish and strengthen me with grace from thy holy Spirit, that I may serve and please thee all my days with a willing and ready heart.

Stablish me.

THe word signifies properly to underprop and shore up something that is weak, declining, and ready to fall.

Hence learn, that even the best of God's children, that have the greatest graces, and be strengthned in faith, yet if they be left unto themselves, alas, they be as weak as wa-
ter, they be not able to stand against the least assault and temptation of the Devil. This David felt and found in himself, and confessed his wickedness, and defires the Lord to establishe and uphold him, to shore him up by the grace of his holy Spirit. Pet. r who seemed to be a valiant Champion, and defied his enemies, and vowed he would rather dye then deny his Lord and Master Christ Jesus, yet, being left to himself, how foully did he fall,

Doct. 5.
Men weak
being left
to himself.
Exod. 15.
34.
Ps. 78. 6.
Ex. 9. 27.
Jud. 3. 17.
Mar. 22.
45.
Heb. 6.

fall, and cowardly deny him three times in one hour, at the voice of a little girl ? So all the falls and infirmities of God's children, though never so wise as *Solomon*, strong as *Sampson*, righteous as *Lot*, holy as *David*, doth prove this to be true : And *Paul*, though he was a blessed Vessel of mercy, greatly enlightened and sanctified, cryes out, *O wretched man that I am* ; and fears the great corruptions of his heart. The child of God may be compared to a staff in a man's hand ; so long as thou dost stay it, and hold it, it will stand upright, but pull away your hand, down it will fall of it self : Even so do we stand, while the Lord doth stay us, and uphold us ; but if he takes away his hand, and leave us, down we go. We be like a little Infant that is in the Nurses hand, so long as she holds it, it will go, and move, and stand ; but if she pull away her hand, it falls, and takes a knock. As God is the Author of all grace, and first Fountain of all mercy ? he alone can turn the heart, work Faith, Repentance, and Obedience : So it is God alone that must give the second grace ; namely, corroboration, continuance in grace, or grace to continue in faith and obedience.

Ro. 7. 24.

This confutes the Doctrine of the Papists, who hold, that a man having grace from God to believe, and repent, can merit at God's hands grace to continue, that God should, *ex condigno*, give him grace to continue ; and that a man being once just, can make himself more perfect ; but *David* doth here confess that all is of God.

Use I.

This

Vſe 2.

Eſa. 30. 6.
1 Cor. 10.

This serves to reprove them who trust too much on their own power and goodness, rely upon their own Wisdom, Knowldg, and Strength : When once they get a little Knowldg and taste of the Word, Oh they think themselves sure and well, they fear no danger, they defie the Devil ; so long as they say their prayers, and serve God well, they hope God will keep them, and so are secure and careless ; but of all men these be in greatest danger, that least fear danger. Look on Peter, he was never more weak than when he thought himself most strong : *I said I ſhall never be mouid ; but thou turnedſt away thy face, and I was ſore troubled. Pride goes before a fall.*

How ſhould this make every man to fear himſelf, to ſuspect his own weakness ! Blessed is the man that fears always, but he that hardnith his heart ſhall fall into deſtruſion, or evil ; where Solomon ſheweth, that a man that doth fear himſelf and his own weakness, is happy ; but he that is ſecure, and trusts in himſelf, ſhall certainly fall into evil. The ſecure ſinner, that fears no danger, is the greatest ſinner. And therefore not knowing our own weakness, how unable we are to ſtand of our ſelves, or to do any good at all, except the Lord endue us with his holy Spirit ; it muſt be a means to make us rely upon the Lord, and pray unto him, that he would uphold us in integrity, faith, obedience, and in true repenſance : for if David, Peter, &c. did fall, whither then shall we fall, if the Lord do but a little leave us to our ſelves ?

VERSE

VERSE XIII.

Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

David, in this verse, doth profess unto the Lord, that if he shall deal thus graciously with him, to pardon and remit his great and grievous sins, and to receive him again into his love and favour, that he will not be unmindful and unthankful for so great a mercy ; but he will become a preacher and proclaimor of God's mercy to others, and labour to turn many to God by true repen-

David to
his petiti-
on joyns
promises.

In this verse we have two parts : first the promise which David maketh unto the Lord, and the duty he vows unto him, namely, *I will teach thy ways unto the wicked*. Secondly, the issue and blessed effect, namely, this, that by his example many poor sinners shall repent, and come to God for mercy.

Parts of
the verse.

Then shall I teach.

THAT is, after I shall find and feel thy mercy bestowed upon me, I will, like a vessel of mercy, draw it out to the good of others. *I will*, that is, I that have fallen and sinned so grievously, and transgressed thy commandments, will teach and publish how merciful, good, and gracious thou hast been

Sense.

to me, and to my soul, and will speak out of the tense and feeling of mine own conscience.

Thy ways.

BY the ways of God here is meant that course and manner of dealing which the Lord taketh with sinners, when they do truly repent; namely, that he is most ready and willing to embrace them, and shew mercy unto them, when they shall acknowledg and confess their sins, bewail them, beg the pardon of them, and seek to him for mercy.

The goodness of God towards ourselves must be made.

Seeing David doth here profess, that if God shall deal thus graciously with him, that then he will be a proclaimer of the same mercy to others; we learn, That it is the duty of every one to shew unto others what God hath done for his soul: when God is good and gracious unto us, we must still be ready to acknowledg the same unto others, thereby to draw them on likewise to a manifestation of the truth, and to seek for the same favour and grace at God's hands. Mat. 5. 16. Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works may glorifie your Father which is in heaven. Thus the Spirit of God, in the Scriptures, remembreth the righteousness of Noah, the faith and obedience of Abram, the patience of Job, the chastity of Joseph, the meekness of Moses. And Christ himself doth testifie of the graces of God that shined in John Baptist, that he was a burning and shining light, Job. 5. Thus the Apostle

Apostle Peter testifieth, 1 Pet. 2. Have your conversation honest amongst the Gentiles, that they which speak evil of you, as of evil doers, may by your good works, which they shall see, glorifie God in the day of visitation. 1. Cor. 9. 11. 2 Cor. 8. 1, 2. Rom. 4. 11. 13.

We learn hence ever to be ready to make known unto others what God hath done for our selves; if so they may further Religion, or provoke others to godliness, or bring glory to God. God is not ashamed of us, to be called our God, and to do us good: let us then never be ashamed to acknowledg his love unto us, for it were a foolish modesty in us to conceal those things which should be uttered. There was a time indeed when Christ would not have himself or his works known, but that was when that knowledg might hinder him and his preaching. But Mat. 10. 27. he commanded his Apostles to speak that in the light, which he had told them in darkness; and to preach that on the house tops, which he had told them in the ear; for now would Christ have himself published abroad. And thus we see how to behave our selves in respect of God's gifts, we must not be ashamed to confess them, but declare them.

Seeing David here professes unto the Lord, that he will not be unmindful and unthankful for his mercy shewed unto him, but will to the uttermost of his power, praise God for it, and shew his thankfulness in drawing others to God. Hence we learn, that it is the duty of all the children of God, that they should labour with their own souls to be

Use 1.

Def. 2.
Thankful-
ness re-
quired.

Phil. 4. 4.
Exod. 18.
10.

Pla. 126.
Gen. 14.
19.
Ps. 32. 22.
Ps. 32. 1.

Ps. 33. 1.

Ps. 103. 1.

thankful unto God for every blessing he bestows upon them, to be mindful of it, to praise God for it, and to shew it in doing good to others : it is all the Lord looks for at our hands, to acknowledg his love and kindness, to be thankful for it ; and when we shall be truly thankful for a benefit received, it is an excellent means to move the Lord to bestow a new blessing upon us ; as we see, if a poor man receive a small favour at our hand, and shall be thankful for it ; we will say he is worthy to have a good turn, it is well bestowed, I see he is thankful for it. So when the Lord bestoweth a benefit upon a man, and sees he is thankful for it, and speaks of it to the honour of God, the Lord is moved thereby to bestow another, but he that is unthankful for the old, is not worthy to receive new.

Hast thou received any special favour, blessing or benefit of God's, know it is thy duty to be thankful for it, to acknowledg it, to speak of it, and to praise God for it. *Rejoyce, ye righteous, in the Lord, for it becomes upright men to be thankful.* It is a comely and a most fit thing ; and David calls upon his soul oft-times to perform this duty ; *Praise thou the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name : praise thou the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.*

And above all other mercies, let us bless God for his love in Christ for the pardon of our sins, as David doth here, and Psal. 103. *forget not all his benefits, who gave thee pardon of thy sins, and forgave thee all thine iniquities.*

ties. And therefore let us remember this duty, and think most seriously of God's blessings, and benefits bestowed upon us. The greatness of them, and number, and continuance of them ; and labour in some measure to be thankful unto God, and especially for the pardon of our sins in Christ Jesus. And withal, let us shew it in doing what good we can unto others.

Let us shun that foul sin of unthankfulness, to forget God's blessings, and pass over his mercies. Let us not be like the nine Lepers, who not one of them returned to praise God; only the poor *Samaritan*, finding himself cleansed, came to bless God for it : So let us take heed that we be not found in that number who forget God's favour. The Lord hath been good unto us, washed and cleansed our souls in Christ's blood; let us return unto God, let us confess it to his glory, and with *David* call on our souls not to forget the benefits of the Lord.

It is a note of an unthankful heart, to obtain a benefit, and not to acknowledg it. Praise is comely, and well becometh the Saints of God ; the want whereof taketh away the comfort and sweet fruit of God's blessings from us. It is a great offence to be unthankful unto men, but far greater unto God, by whom we live, move, and have our being : And therefore let us learn, that whosoever we have obtained any favour or blessing at God's hands, be it concerning this life, or the life to come ; let us thankfully return the calves of our lips unto him, and let us

Use I.

O never

Dott. 3.
Fruit of
faith to
seek the
good of
others.
Psal. 66. 6

Pf. 119.
Gal. 3.
2 Cor. 1.
Isa. 38. 1.
Luk 22. 2

Use I.

never shew our selves more ready to ask, than we are willing to praise the Lord when he hath granted the request of our lips.

It is a special fruit of faith and unfeigned repentance, to convey grace unto others, to shew what God hath done for our souls, and to draw out the blessings which God hath bestowed upon us, to the good and benefit of others. The Prophet David calleth all men unto him, and makes his speech, *Come (saith he) I will shew you what God hath done for my soul.* And the Elect are called vessels of mercy, because they being themselves filled with the mercy of God, they should draw out the same good liquor for the comfort of others. St. Paul saith, *God had mercy on him, that he might shew mercy unto others.* The child of God is not like unto churlish Nabal, to say, *Every man for himself,* and keep all for themselves; but they be pitiful and bountiful, yea, and (to their power) helpful unto others.

This may serve to comfort those who have been careful for the performance of this duty, that have been careful to make others partakers of the same comfort they have reaped themselves. It is a blessed thing indeed, when men have endeavoured to their power to benefit others, to exhort them, to admonish them, to comfort them, and in all things to have sought their good: Oh what a wonderful consolation and comfort shall this be unto us, when we leave this world, and go the way of all flesh, to remember we have sought the good of others! *Dan. 12. 3.*

They

Tony that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars in the firmament. Luke 12. 43. Blessed is that Servant whom his Master coming shall find so doing. We shall find more comfort of heart and joy of conscience, when we depart this life, that we have been faithful in that little committed to our trust, and made others to partake of it, then if we had great abundance of earthly blessings.

This may serve to reprove that common conceit in men's minds, that so long as they do well themselves, they need not care how others do, whether they sink or swim; and therefore they keep all to themselves, never look to benefit others : like a covetous and foolish Nabal, part not with a bit to David : so these keep all for themselves, by no means seek to draw out the graces of God for the good of others. But it is impossible for any Christian man or woman, who hath tasted truly of the mercy of God for his comfort, and the work of grace, but he must communicate the same, to the good of others ; and indeed they are never so profitable as then. As we see Spices, though never so sweet and savory, are not commendable until they be rubbed and chafed. And therefore let us remember to practise this duty, to help others, and instruct them, and communicate our knowledge, comfort, experience, and judgment, even to the good of others.

When David saith, he will teach, not his own ways, but God's ; namely, how the Lord

Use 2.

Isa. 3 8. 15.

Doct. 4.

What Doctrine Ministers ought to teach.

Mat. 12.
18.

Ro. 12. 1.
2 Cor. 5.
18.

use. 2.

Rev. 3.
Luk. 15.

dealeth with penitent sinners, we learn what it is that the Ministers of the Word ought especially to teach poor sinners, namely, *The ways of God*; that is, how God deals with poor sinners: namely, that he is most willing to embrace them, and pardon their crimes, if they will unsigneedly repent. Christ was exceeding plentiful in this kind of teaching; howsoever he did sometimes declare and pronounce judgement to impenitent sinners, yet it was his usual course to preach God's infinite mercy to all such as would repent, to invite them, to perswade and allure them to turn to God.

Well then, this may direct all such as the Lord hath called to preach his word, to take this course, that howsoever they may and must pronounce God's judgements against impenitent offenders, yet they must preach God's infinite mercy in Christ to all that will repent; and shew how ready the Lord is to shew mercy to all them that confess and acknowledg their faults, and be weary of them, and desire pardon. For, sure it is, that if there be any spark of grace in men's hearts, when they shall hear of God's abundant mercy in Christ, that the Lord standeth at the door and knocks; that the Lord, like the father of the Prodigal child, will meet us in the mid-way; it must needs, if there be not a heart of steel, make our bowels yearn, and for shame to seek unto the Lord.

And it was *Paul's* manner to intreat men that they would be reconciled unto God, to beseech them in his name with love and kind-

kindness, with tears and prayers, to pray them, to intreat them, to beseech his hearers: and we shall find that churlish, tough, and harsh dealing great words, and thundering speeches be not always the best to win men's souls: but when we shal with a mild and loving spirit intreat men, and beseech them to repent and turn to God, it must needs affect them.

It must stir their hearts up to a most careful and attentive hearing and listening to the word of God. For a man cannot perceive and know the ways of God by nature; no, by nature we conceive of God as a terrible Judge and angry God, and flee from him as Adam did; and therefore we had need to have the word of God preached and taught unto us, and be instructed in the ways of God, how the Lord our good God hath shewed mercy unto great sinners, and will to us if we can repent, and seek unto him. For the Lord must draw us by his mercy, else we cannot come at him.

To the wicked: And sinners shall be converted unto thee.

THAT is, impenitent sinners, such as live in sin without repentance. Hence mark, who had need to be taught in the ways of God, namely, poor sinners, that live and lie in sin, even the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, such as never heard of God, or faith, or repentance, &c. Such poor souls

Do. 5.
The Ignorant are to
be taught
the ways
of God.

Vst. I.

Rom. 10.
14.
Pro. 29.
18.
Mar. 14.

souls had need to be taught the ways of God.

This may admonish all those that be set over God's people, Magistrates, and such as have power in their hand, to provide that such poor ignorant people as want the means, may be taught the ways of God. *How shall they call on him on whom they have not believed? how shall they believe him of whom they have not heard? how shall they hear without a Preacher?* And where prophecying fails, the people perish. And it is said of our Saviour Christ, that when he saw the people as poor sheep having no shepherd, he had compassion on them, and his bowels yearned towards them. Oh that the bowels of all such that have charge to look unto it, might yearn for the poor souls of this land, to provide for them the bread of life.

The chief cause why men live in sin, be so vile, wicked and unclean, is, because they be not taught the word and ways of God; it could not be, if they were taught and instructed, that they should be so vile and wicked, so ignorant, profane, irreligious, and superstitious. But where visions fail, the people must needs perish.

And therefore those that seek to take away teaching and preaching of the word of God, of what spirit are they? David, he thinks it the only way to bring men to God, to convert poor sinners: and therefore to take it away, to root out the Ministry of the word, and means of our salvation, what is it else but to cast away the souls of the people? to famish them, to pine them, and to starve them?

them? And therefore let us pray unto God, through Christ Jesus, that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth painful Labourers into his Harvest.

The second part of the verse shews the fruit of this duty that David will perform, namely, that hereby, by this Doctrine, and his example, many a poor sinner shall be converted unto God.

In that David here promiseth to himself this use and fruit, that he shall be, by his preaching and example, a means to bring others to God; Hence we may learn a gracious comfort for all godly Ministers of the word, who labour both by life and doctrine to win others, that if they shall be painful in teaching, and careful to live a godly life, they shall certainly find the blessing of God upon their labours, to the converting of sinners, and saving of souls. *If I had sent these Prophets, and if they had stood in my counsel, and declared my ways unto my people, then they should have turned them from their evil ways, and from the wickedness of their own inventions.*

Where the Lord shews, that all such as be the true Prophets of God, stand in his stead and teach his ways, they shall see the blessing of God upon their labours. And the cause why men convert not souls, is because they were never sent of God, and do not teach God's ways, and stand not in his stead; or else because though they teach the truth, yet their lives be vile and wicked, they pluck down with one hand what they build with the

Mat. 9.

2 Part of
the verse.Doct. 9.
Conversion
of a sin-
ner is God's
work.Jer. 13.
22.

the other, and destroy that in life which they teach in Doctrine.

Vſt 1.

Hence mark the reason why so many great and learned men, of excellent gifts, wit, and learning, do not convert many souls unto God; because they either teach not God's ways, but their own ways, their wit, eloquence, and devices; or else though they teach well, yet they live ill, and so cause their doctrine to be less regarded, and weaken the power of it by their sinful life; and it pleases God, in his great mercy, to use the labour of his poor servants, who dare not utter nor speak their own words, nor seek themselves, but God's word, in plain evidence and simplicity, and live according to their teaching, the Lord doth bless their labours, for the conversion of sinners, and saving of poor souls.

Vſt 2.

It might admonish all those who either teach their own ways by painted eloquence, toys of tales; or else, though they teach the truth, that they joyn with it a godly life, else they may be long enough ere they do any good; and if they would convert sinners, let them first be converted. *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* And let no such careless Ministers wonder that God gives no blessing to their labours, seeing they fail either in teaching God's word truly and plainly, or else in life they live wicked and ungodly. One *Achan* is enough to infect a whole family; one *Jonah*, a fugitive servant of God, is able to endanger a Ship, and the whole company in it: so one sin is able to destroy

Lok. 22

23.

stroy the soul of man ; Oh then, what will a world of sins do, which we daily and hourly commit against our Creator !

VERSE XIV.

Deliver me from blood, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing joyfully of thy righteousness.

In this verse, yet once again David returns to intreat for mercy and favour at the hands of God, that he would pardon his great and grievous sins, yea, his bloody sins, and that God would in mercy deliver him from that punishment which was due unto him for the same ; for he intreats the Lord to deliver him from blood, that is, his horrid and capital sin of murther, and shedding that innocent blood of Uriah, his faithful servant, and many others with him ; so also the punishment due for it.

This verse contains two parts : First, a request, with great earnestness, to God for deliverance, from his grievous crime, *Deliver me from blood.* Secondly, Reasons to move the Lord thereunto, namely, taken from the honour and glory of God, which he will shew forth : *And my tongue shall sing joyfully of thy righteousness.*

In the Petition, first mark what is the request, namely, that God would deliver him from blood, that is, the most cruel and bloody

David
cannot sa-
tisfie him-
self in seek-
ing mercy
for his sins.

1 Sam. 11.

Parts of
the verse.

dy sin of shedding the innocent blood of many of his subjects.

Secondly, the manner of his request, O God, thou art the God of my salvation ; that he prays to God now with faith, assuring himself, that upon his repentance God was now reconciled unto him ; and though he had sinned grievously, yet not clean fallen from grace, but so as still he could call God his God, and the God of his salvation.

Deliver me from blood.

Doct. I.
The hid-
eousness of
the sin of
murder.

THAT is, from the punishment which is due unto me for shedding the innocent blood of Uriah, and the rest which were slain with him.

Gen. 4.

We must observe that which hath been taught before, namely, that David prayed often and earnestly unto God for the pardon of his sins, he could not at one or two petitions obtain it, but is fain to pray again and again for pardon. Hence we learn, That murther and shedding of innocent blood is a most horrible sin ; and he that is guilty of blood, it will wound his conscience, it will make him to quake and tremble at God's vengeance which pursues him, unless he repent : as in Cain, after he had slain his brother, and the Lord had brought him to a sight of his cruel murther, he cries out, that his sin is greater than can be forgiven ; and that every one that meets him would kill him : such is the conscience guilty of murther, it can find no rest, no ease, neither in company or alone,

lone, in any thing, but still torments the mind, till God gives grace truly to repent.

Neither may or must we think that this guilt and terror of our mind or Conscience cometh through the guiltiness of the Law, shame of the world, or fear of punishment; for let a murtherer have security given him from all the Laws, and freedom from all punishment, yet a murtherer would never be at quiet, his conscience would ever trouble and torment him, yea, and follow him up and down in all places, and open his own mouth to bewray himself. Thus are God's judgments upon them that they should fear all things, who will not fear him that made all things. If a man had all the pleasures that heart could desire, yet that can yield him no true comfort and contentment, when the conscience is guilty of so great and horrible sins; and albeit, for a time, the conscience of carnal men, that never truly repented of their sins, seemeth to be at rest; yet it is a wild and savage beast, which, lying asleep, seemeth tame and gentle, but being raised and roused up, flieth in a man's face.

Seeing murther and shedding of innocent blood is so horrible a sin, so odious and execrable, so fearful and damnable, how should it make all men shun it, and be afraid of it, never to embrue their hands in the blood of any man, for blood will have blood. *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God made he man.*

And this was one special thing which moved David to intreat the Lord, not only to pardon

Gen. 4. 2. 1.

Ust. I.

Gen. 9. 6.

pardon his bloody sin of killing *Abrahah*, but also that he would not punish him, and bring his vengeance upon him, and his children after him, for shedding of his blood. Well then, abhor this fearful sin of murther, for blood will have blood, and will cry for vengeance to Heaven. And here we are to be sorry, and to bewail our sinful times, that shedding of blood is not punished more severely. Wilful murther is winked at, and mocked at, and made but a money-matter. *Na*, (saith the Lord) because of oaths the Land shall mourn; so for murther it shall mourn. Well, let us beware of this foul sin of murther, and shun all occasions that tend to it, as hatred, drunkentees, desire of revenge, quarrellings, fightings, &c. These sins of *David* did multiply his sorrows, for he watered his couch with tears: a world of sins must needs have a sea of tears to wash them away, as *David* did, for upon his true repentance God's favour was afterwards proportionable to his sorrows.

And if it be so hainous and horrible a sin to shed the blood of the body, and to kill the body; if murthering of the body (I say) be so hainous, what shall become of Soul-murtherers, that shed the blood of poor souls? It is ten thousand times more grievous, as the soul is far more worth then the body; and if he shall perish, and is worthy to die that murders the body, how much more is he worthy to die that sheds the blood, not of one, but of many a poor soul; And such be all those that either teach not the Word

*Jer. 13.
10.
Hos. 4.*

Ezek. 3.

Word of God at all, or teach it negligently ;
they be foul-murtherers, and shall give a just
account for it one day.

We see that no man, though never so great,
can go free from God's judgments for a mur-
ther. *David* was a great King, a man that
was above all mens Laws, yet the conscience
of his sin accused him, and he could have
no rest, till he had got the pardon of it. So
as we see the great force of man's conscience ;
though he could escape all the judgments of
men, yet the conscience will accuse, till God
do clear him : and this we may see in many
men, who being guilty of this sin, although
they have by money or friends got pardon
and freedom from the Law of man, yet if
God touch them for it, they can never have
peace till they have bewailed this sin, and
got the pardon from God ; but some of them
even pine and languish away, and never look
up all their days ; such is the conscience of
murther, and shedding innocent blood, -that
he may fly a thousand miles, he may be a
great man, a King, that no man dare call
him to account, yet he carries that in his bo-
osome which will dog him and pursue him,
neither shall he find rest till he have repen-
ted, and be reconciled to God by the blood of
Christ.

Here is matter of comfort and consolation
for all such as have been great and grievous
sinners, notorious wicked livers, that if they
can repent, be humbled, bewail their sins,
beg pardon, the Lord will shew them mercy.
David here found favour for the pardon of
his

Use 3.

Isa. 66. 24.
Mat. 9. 25.
Psa. 49. 3,
4, 5, 6, 7.

Doct. 2.
God hath
mercy for
such as
seek mer-
cy.

Luk. 8. 2.

his bloody sins, adultery and murther, upon his true repentance : so Peter for his grievous and hainous sins ; and Mary Magdalen, out of whom were cast seven Devils, was saved ; Lot, though he committed incest with his own Daughters, yet found favour at God's hands. So as we see great sinners, if they unfeignedly repent, shall find great mercy.

This is warranted from the Lord's own mouth, Isa. 1. 18. Though your sins were as crimson, they shall be made as white as snow ; though they were as red as scarlet, they shall be as wool. And again, Isa. 44. 22. I have put away thy transgressions like a cloud, and thy sins like a mist. Isa. 33. 23. and Isa. 43. 25. Jer. 31. 31.

Vsi. I.

Isa. 1. 16.
18.

Let every one of us listen to this Doctrine : Hast thou been a notorious wicked liver, a miserable finner, a common drunkard, a filthy liver, a most vile and notorious blasphemer, a thief or robber ? hast thou hated and persecuted God's Ministers, and his dear children, and contemned the blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ ? Well, lo, if thou canst truly repent, confess thy grievous sin, bewail it, cry to God for mercy and pardon of it, the Lord will shew thee mercy ; for no sin, though never so great, can sever thee, and cut thee off from mercy, if thou hast grace to repent, and beg the pardon of it. And therefore though thy sins have been many and great, adultery, murther, &c. take heed thou despairest not, with Cain, to say, *My sin is greater than can be forgiven* ; but repent with David, and God will pardon it.

Let

Let no man presume hereupon to sin, because God will pardon great sins : For, as it is true that God will pardon great sins, when men repent truly of them, so without repentance there is no pardon of the least sin : and if thou shalt wittingly and willingly run into great sins, it is a great doubt that thou shalt never, or hardly get out of them : he that sins because God is merciful, doth abuse his mercy, and then his mercy shall be turned into Judgement. God's mercy should lead us to repentance, and not make us bold to sin.

Vse 2.

Rom. 2.4.

Seeing David prays and intreats the Lord not only to deliver him from sin, but also from the punishment due to his sin, the curse of God, which was due to his grievous sins of adultery and murther ; as the Prophet told him, because he had done this evil, *the sword shall never depart from his house, and his own sons should defile his wives* ; We learn, in regard of God's fearful judgements, plagues and punishments, that attend and wait upon sin, men ought to be afraid to commit sin against God ; for sure it is, that the curse follows sin ; and as sin grows, so grows the curse. For the Lord is a just God, and must needs punish the transgressors of his Law. And although as yet he takes not his loving kindness from them, neither suffers his truth to fail, yet he will visit their transgressions with the Rod, and their sins with scourges, as we may see here by the example of David, of the people of Israel, *Judg. 4. 1, 2. of Miriam, Numb. 12. of Solomon, Asa, Jethoshaphat, Josiah,*

Dott. 4.
The pu-
nishment
of sin
should ter-
rifie us
from sin-
ning.

2 Sam. 10.

Josiah, Hezekiah, &c. If then we break, and do not observe his Statutes, and keep not his Commandments, when he searcheth with lights, and findeth out our sins, we must, with *Achan*, give the glory to God, and make confession unto him; we must pronounce righteousness to belong unto him, and unto our selves open shame, and confusion of faces for ever,

Use 1.

Well then, let us remember this, if we sin, certainly the Lord will plague us, and punish us, either in our body, our soul, goods or good name, wife or children; the Lord will find us out, we cannot escape his judgments, we cannot hide or cloak our sins from him; if men could be perswaded of this, O they would be afraid to lie and continue in sin, if they thought God were a just God to torment them, and plague them for their sins: how darest thou sin, if thou couldst be perswaded of this, that God will certainly plague thee? Indeed the meiry of God should make us loath to sin, but if that will not, yet let his justice terrifie and fright all scoure and careleſs sinners.

Use 2.

Rev. 20. 14.

Note.

Let no man sooth himself to think he shall escape. If any man hear the curses of God's Law against sin, and shall bleſs himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, although I walk after the stubbornness of my heart; then the Lord will not be merciful unto that man, but the wrath of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against him, and he shall bring upon him every curse written in his Law, to root him clean out: *I will visit that*

that be frozen in their drags, and say in their hearts, God will neither do good nor evil. And if neither the mercy of God will move us, nor his judgments make us afraid to commit sin, our case is fearful and dangerous.

Lastly, Seeing God chasteneth his own children when they offend, then it wuſt needs follow, that the wicked, which are none of his, shall not escape his revenging hand : if the Lord be ſevere againſt finners, that he will not ſpare, no, not the fins that fall to his own dear children, being of his own houſhold, and Citizens of his own Kingdom, and the members of his own body, if the Lord do deal ſo sharply with theſe, O how heavy will he lay his judgments upon the wicked ? 1 Pet. 4. 17, 18. The time is come that judgment muſt begin at the house of God : If it firſt begin with us, what ſhall be the end of them that obey not the Gofpel of God ? And if the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the wicked and finner appear ? But God correcteth the godly in mercy, the wicked in wrath ; the one as a loving Father, the other as a just Judge. O that all wicked and ungodly men would lay this to heart, and know that auſſured judgment is reſerved for them at the great day of the Lords general Affize, when they ſhall, will they, nill they, plead guilty at God's Bar, where the Register book of all their actions ſhall be brought forth, and they ſhall receive according to their works.

In that David ſpeaks in the plural number, deliver me from blood, that my moſt hainous, horriblie, and cruel fin ; he doth not mince it,

uſe 3.

Doct. 4.
True note
of a peni-
tent to ag-
gravate his
fins.

it, or lessen it, but sets it out in colours, a bloody sin, a monstrous sin. Therefore in true repentance and confession of our sins, we must labour to express them to the full, and make room enough to beat our consciences, to make our hearts smart, and feel the weight and circumstances by aggravating them, to set them out, to make them appear as vile and filthy as we can ; for thereby we shew our grief for, and hatred of them : As the Church of God did, in the ninth of *Daniel*, who confessed her sins, not lightly, but with wonderful and great aggravation, in heaping up one thing on another ; and as St. *Austin* did, who for a small offence, as we account of it in our time and days, for robbing of an Orchard or Garden of some Pears or Apples, or such like fruit, as in his second Book of his Confessions, the fourth Chapter, doth appear, how he doth aggravate his sin in weighing all the circumstances.

First, he saith, This theft which I committed, was not only in the Law of the Lord forbidden, but by man too, and I had it in my intention and thoughts daily, and did remember that it was a sin, and yet did it.

Secondly, I wilfully resolved to do it, what ere should come of it ; and yet I did it.

Thirdly, I did it not for want, but in disdain of piety, and likewise out of an envious mind to injure others.

Fourthly, I had in my own ground great store of the same fruit, nay, better too.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, I did steal, not so much to delight in the act, as my own theft; that I might say with my old companions, that I and they had robb'd such an Orchard, at such a time.

Sixthly, That there were in my company a number of desperate youths, and incarnate devils, to egge me on.

Seventhly, he saith, That before they went, or thought of this action they had been a drinking, sporting and dancing.

Eighthly, We, in a covetous manner, after we had eaten our bellies full, did carry all away.

Ninthly, We, carried so many away, that they were a heavy burthen to us.

Tenthly, When we came to our abode, we gave them to the Hogs, and abused the creatures of God by wantonness, and excess. And then he concludes, and cries out, *O my Creator, O my God, behold my heart; I beseech thee to shew pity and compassion upon me; anoint my wounds with the vyl of mercy, restore me my sight, cloath my nakedness, enrich me that am poor, strengthen me that am weak, help me that am fain.* And thus did David, which is the party meant in my Text, cry out and say, *Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation.*

This condemneth most men, who when they are told of their sins, do seek to cloak and excuse them, to make them little sins of great sins, if they could well: it is a sign of a naughty heart, as we see in Saul, who would not confess his sin, but excuse it: it shews men

men are not humbled nor grieved, have no hatred of it : but if we did truly see the loathsomeness of sin, O we would aggravate it, yes, speak as bad as we can of it, and not excuse it in any case. The second thing in the Petition, is the manner of it, namely, that he doth pray in faith and affiance of Gods mercy ; for he prays unto God, and describes him to be the God of his salvation, because he puts all his affiance in God's mercy for salvation, and acknowledgeth it to be the gift of God.

Doct. 5.
Faith required in
Prayer.

In that *David* thus prayeth for the pardon of his sins with faith and affiance, we learn, That if we desire to obtain our requests, we must pray to God with faith and affiance in God's mercy ; for at the same time that God toucheth a poor sinner to mourn for his sins, and to repent, he gives him faith to pray to him with affiance for pardon and salvation. So then we see, whatsoever we ask at God's hands, we must ask it in faith : If any lack wisdom, let him ask in Faith, and waver not ; for he that wavers can have no hope to obtain any thing at God's hands.

Jam. 5.
Heb. 11. 1.

Whosoever doubteth whether God will grant his requests or not, can never pray for any thing earnestly and effectually. This our Saviour teacheth, *Mark 11. 24.* *Whatsoever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye shall have it, and it shall be done unto you.* And none can have this assurance, that God is ready to hear them, and to grant their requests, but only the faithful, who have first this assurance, that their sins are pardoned, and that

that they are reconciled to God in Christ Jesus.

How should this move us all to labour to get saving faith, that so we may pray in faith, and obtain our requests, pardon of sins, wisdom, the gifts of God's Spirit, &c. For he that comes in unbelief can look for no mercy at God's hands : And therefore the prayer of many unbelievers, ignorant souls, (as) they be but bablings and can do no good. O then, let us labour to be able to say, My God, give me this or that.

This must teach us to moderate our desires, and take heed we ask not any thing that is not warranted by the Word ; for unless it be warranted by the Word we cannot have any assurance he will hear us, for there is no faith without the Word. And therefore when we shall ask things for our own lusts and pleasure, it is just with Almighty God not to hear us.

When David calls the Lord, *My God, and the God of my Salvation*, he acknowledgeth that salvation, pardon of sins, life, and all good things come from God, and are his gracious gifts in Christ.

It is he who at the first gave us life, when we were stark dead in trespasses and sins. It is he again that keeps our souls in life ; if we fall, he raiseth us up ; when we wander, he recalleth us from judgments past, present, and to come ; he hath, doth, and will deliver us, so that he may well be called *The God of our Salvation*.

Let us then acknowledge this, that all the good things we enjoy, the favour of God, pardon of our sins, justification, sanctification,

Use 1.

Doct. 6.
Praise of
our salva-
tion proper-
ly belongs
to God.

Use 1.

Rom. 3. 2.

tion, redemption, &c: all these are the free mercies and gifts of God in Christ; and then we shall learn to depend on God for the comforts of this life: for we know that God hath given us Christ, and delivered us from sin, death, hell; how then can he deny us the lesser things for this life?

Vit. 2.

Rom. 6.

Dan. 9.

Job 42. 6.

Eph. 2.

Saying salvation is the gift of God, we see that the Doctrine of the Papists is erroneous, who teach men that they may merit salvation and mercy at God's hand, pardon of sin, salvation, and life eternal. *David* acknowledgeth it to be the free gift of God; and therefore let us abhor their Doctrine, and our own goodness or worthiness, and acknowledge that all we may enjoy for salvation, it is the free and undeserved favour of God in Christ Jesus.

Note.

David be felt now the heavy weight of God's anger, which pressed him down exceedingly, and brake his heart; yet, withal, he had some feeling of the mercy of God, which made him bold to go to God for pardon, so that he could call him, my God. Wherein we may note the difference of Gods children from Infidels, that have no faith; the child of God, although he be touched to the quick with the feeling of God's displeasure, yet he can by faith go to his Father, and make his moan unto him; but a wicked man, that hath no faith in Christ, he conceiveth nothing but God's anger and judgement, and therefore flies from him, and cannot give one rap at God's mercy-seat, cannot say for his life say, and confess, My God, My Father, but is glad

glad to run from God, as Adam did; and so in time to despair, as Cain and Judas did; for there is no doubt, if they had repented, but they had been forgiven.

It is observed of *Abraham*, that when he prayed to the Lord for the City *Sodom*, that *Abraham* gave over asking before God gave over granting. Therefore, I say, let not the multitude of our sins and offences be a means to deter and hinder our repentance; for if it do, it will be our destruction in the end: but let our tongues sing of thy righteousness.

And my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness

These words contain in them the reason of his requests; as if he should say, If thou shalt, O Lord, pardon my offences, and in mercy deliver me from the curse and punishment due to me for them, my tongue shall be a preacher and publisher of thy mercy unto others: *And my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness*. By righteousness is not meant here the justice of God, whereby he takes vengeance for sin; but by righteousness is meant the merciful dealing of God in keeping promise with all repentant sinners, in pardoning and remitting their offences, and receiving them to mercy.

It is impossible for any man or woman, who having truly tasted of God's mercy in Christ for life and salvation, to keep it in as that shall not break forth and appear; but he that hath his heart affected with God's mercy in Christ, it will untie his tongue to relate of it,

Doit. 7.
God's
mercies
must untie
our
tongues
to praise
him.

Luk. 22.

13.

Chr. 19.

Act. 11.

18.

Thes. 2.

Luk. 17.

Jam. 3.

smil to praise God for it. As it is not possible to keep fire so close, but it will smok and flame in time; so the feeling of God's love cannot but flame out and appear to the comfort of others.

Well, by the rule of this Doctrine, we may see that few have their hearts affected with the mercy of God in Christ, because they seldom or never take occasion to speak of it, and to praise God for it. The poor Leper finding himself to be cleansed, came to praise God for it; and Naaman would give Elisa a reward: but our hearts have no comfort in them, therefore we open not our mouths to praise God.

*action with mouth be witness alwaye shew
it yis blueste and my tongue, to alle
excell in rebelling from O sterl go*

Observe how David speaks, that as in heart he will laud God, so in words he will praise him. Of all the parts of a man's body, the tongue only serveth and ought to honour God, and to praise him. That serveth to unfold the truth of God, to bless him, to praise him, and to instruct others.

Well, seeing that God hath of all members of the body ordained the tongue to be that member whereby we shall honour and praise him, let us govern our tongue so, as it may serve to open his will, to praise and laud him, to speak of his wondrous works: let us use it well in prayer, in speaking of God's mercy and judgment to instruct others: and in any case let us set a watch before our mouths, that we sin not in speeches: if any man

man sin not in his tongue, the same is a perfect man.

V V 3 2 8 3 V
Of thy righteousness.

DAVID CALLS GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AND TRUTH

David calls God's faithfulness and truth in keeping promise to repentant sinners, *His righteousness*; wherein note a wonderful comfort to all repentant sinners, that God avoucheth he shall be unjust, and unrighteous, if he should not give them mercy and pardon when they repent; seeing he hath tired himself by his promise; so as if he should not shew them mercy, he should be unjust, and deny himself, and be no God.

Well then, let this provoke every man to repent, and turn to God! For if thou dost bewail thy sins, and beg pardon, thou maist challenge it at God's hand, urge him with his promise; and he can no more deny thee mercy than he can deny himself, for he will pardon repentant sinners. And this methinks should move all sinners to repent, seeing the Lord is true of his word, and cannot deny thee mercy, unless he should deny himself, and so be unjust; which is impossible, for he is true of his word.

Doct. 8.
God's
righteou-
ness what
it is.

Not.

P 8 VERSE

V E R S E X V .

*Open thou my lips O Lord, and my mouth
shall show forth thy praise.*

David having sundry times prayed, and preferred many requests unto God for grace and mercy for pardon of his sins ; in the 13 and 14 verses he useth a reason drawn from his thankfulness, which he will shew unto God, in labouring to set forth his glory, in being a faithful and zealous preacher of God's mercy unto others, to draw them unto God.

But here, in this verse, David finding and feeling his mouth, as it were, fast stopped, and his lips tied up, by reason of his sins, and the feeling of God's anger, intreateth him to open his lips again, and to give him matter of praise and thanksgiving.

Open thou my lips.

AS if he should say, O Lord, I confess that my sins, and the great grief I have conceived for them by the sense and feeling of thy displeasure hath stopped my mouth, so as I am not able to preach thy mercy, and to praise thee as I desire : now then I beseech thee, Lord, to take from me that sorrow and extremity of grief, by pardoning my sins, and receiving me into favour, that I may have

have mercy ministered unto me, to praise thy name for the pardon of my sins. Deliver me, O most gracious Father, from thy wrath, and eternal damnation.

So long as the conscience doth accuse for sin, and men are not assured of God's Love in Christ, poor souls they cannot so much as once open their mouths, and move their tongues and lips, to praise God with any sound comfort. For how can a condemned man do this, that can find nothing but hell in his conscience, and trouble of mind? No, thy sin, and grief for sin, and fear of God's wrath, will stop thy mouth. Let any man make trial of his own heart, and he shall find this true by his own experience, that the guiltiness of sin, and accusation of conscience for fear of God's anger, will stop a man's mouth, so as he shall not be able to open his mouth with comfort to praise the Almighty.

Yea, although a man be elected, called, and sanctified, the dear child of God, a sound Christian, yet when he shall fall into sin, adultery, smurther, &c. when the poor conscience is now upon the Rack, he shall feel a Hell for the present, he shall find his mouth stopped, so as where he could before praise God thankfully and comfortably, and call on his Name, yea, he would be a means to stir up others; yet after the committing of sin, and accusing of conscience, he shall find his lips tied up, and his mouth stopped for the present time: no power nor will to praise Almighty God; no, but this will sound often

Doc. I.
Sin takes away the use of the Tongue, that man cannot praise God as he should.

Ps. 50. 16.

and loud in thy ears, what hast thou to do to declare my Ordinance, and to take my name into thy mouth? So that a poor sinner in distress, and feeling the conscience to accuse for some sin, and fearing God's displeasure, shall fear even to name and mention the name of the Almighty.

Use. 1.

Seeing this is the woful and bitter fruit of sin, against knowledg and conscience, even to stop our mouths, and to ty up our tongues, so as we shall not be able once to open our lips to praise God with comfort; how should this make us exceeding afraid of sin, to commit it, to be afraid of offending God, and wounding our consciences, so as we shall not dare to mention the name of God. We see, they which be near to the King, or great persons, if they know any thing that offends them, so as they shall not endure in their presence, they will be careful to thinke and avoid it. Well, sin is of that nature, that it will make us afraid once to mention the Name of God, but with reverence and ashamed to come before him, and quake to call upon him.

Use 2.

If thou canst now call upon God with comfort, and praise him cheerfully with peace of conscience; O make much of it, and take heed of sin and disobedience, for that will be a means to stop the mouth of thy conscience, and cause thee that thou shalt not be able to open thy mouth, so praise the Lord.

Use 3.

We see here, that all the praises that ungodly men offer unto God, they be but as desperate songs of a condemned man; as if one

one arraigned and condemned for treason,
should sing, and make himself merry when
he is at death's door, it is but mad mirth. Is
my man merry let him sing Psalms ; is any sad,
let him pray. So then, seeing wicked men
live in sin, and in danger of God's venge-
ance, hell and damnation, it were better for
them to weep, and to wring their hands, as
houl and weep rich men. So if ungodly men
knew all, and saw God's vengeance hanging
over them, hell-fire gaping for them, and the
Devil leading them blind-fold to the place of
perdition, they would change all their mirth
into lamentation and mourning ; for so long
as thou livest in sin, without assurance of
God's mercy in Christ, alas, thou hast no
power to open thy lips, or to move thy
tongue to praise the Lord.

If David could not of himself open his
lips to praise God, but the Lord must unlock
them by the key of the Spirit, and put his
finger into his mouth, and say *Ephesians*; hence
we learn; That it is not in the power of man
to keep the Law of God, to merit heaven
and salvation, by his own goodness and de-
ferts. For if a man have not in his power,
so much as to open his lips, how much less to
perform the Law, and so to merit heaven and
salvation? No, a man cannot of himself think
a good thought, but the Lord must cause
both the will and the deed.

It serves to pull down the pride of mens
hearts ; for by nature we are given to think
well of our selves, to admire our own good-
ness and worthiness, and our own gifts, as if

Jam. 4. 4.

Jam. 4. 9.

Dott. 2.
No ability
in man to
perform a-
ny good.

Use I.

we could perform great matters : and yet (alas.) we are not able to open our lips, but by God's help : but if God have given thee any gift or power to do, or speak well, be not proud of it ; *What hast thou that thou hast not received?* Oh then, why art thou proud of it ? Well, let us acknowledg whence we received all, and give God the glory.

Use 1.

This condemns the erroneous doctrine of the Papists, who so much justify man's free-will and goodness, that he being but helped by grace a little, is able to keep the Law, yea, to merit salvation and life eternal. But if they cannot by their own power so much as move their lips, or open their mouth, how can they with all their goodness, keep the Law, and so merit salvation ?

Use 2.

Seeing the motion of the lips, and so of the whole body, is of God, and no man can speak a word but by the power of God, nor say, *Christ is the Lord,* but by the power of the holy Ghost; yea, *in him we live, move, and have our being :* O then, how should we be most careful to speak, and do, so as God may have glory ! for unless the Lord give thee power, thou canst not move thy finger, nor thy tongue, or once open thy lips, if the Lord deny thee his favour, and with-hold his power ; as in that wicked Jeroboam, when he would have slain the Prophet of God for crying out against his sins, the Lord smote his hand that it withered, and he could not pull it in again. Well, let us all take heed how we use and abuse our tongues, lest the Lord in justice do make them cleave to the roof of our mouths for the same.

The

The second part of the verse contains a solemn protestation of David, that if the Lord shall thus shew him mercy, in pardoning his sin, and receiving him into favour again, that then he will be most willing and ready to praise God, and to publish his mercy and goodness, whereby the Lord shall reap much glory.

Hereby we see, what it is that God requires at our hands, for all the mercies he bestows upon us, namely, praise and thanksgiving, that we should speak of God's mercies, seek to honour him, and to be thankful for his blessings. This David shews more plainly. *What shall I give unto the Lord for all his benefits? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.* Where he shews, that all that God looks for at our hands is praise and thanksgiving. So the Lord himself having rehearsed his great blessings unto his people, saith thus; *O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear him, to love him, and to walk in his ways?* where he shews wherein stands our true thankfulness. Namely, not only in word to acknowledg his mercy, but in life to fear him, love him, call upon him, trust in him, and keep his commandments.

Seeing this is all the Lord requires for his great and continual blessings and mercies, for our souls and bodies, namely, thankfulness, acknowledging his love and mercy, and praising him for the same; let us labour with our own hearts to give the Lord praise, to acknowledg his mercy and goodness bestowed upon

Doct. 3.
Thanksgiving a necessary duty.

Ps. 116.

Deut. 10.
12.

Vte. 1.

Pl. 103. upon us : It is a comely thing to be thankful.

And that we may the better be stirr'd up to perform this worthy duty of praising God, let us consider both the greatness and continuance of God's blessings bestowed upon us, as David did, *Forget not all his benefits, who gave thee pardon of thy sins, &c.* So let us bethink our selves of God's love and mercy to us : First, in electing us to be the sons of God, in delivering us from hell and damnation, in redeeming us by the death and blood-shedding of his own Son, in preserving us from so many dangers, in feeding us, and cloathing us, and all the rest of his blessings for this life, and that which is to come. O if we could thus bethink our selves of the number, greatness, and continuance of God's mercies, how could we be so unkind to forget, or to be unthankful for his blessings ? We see, if a friend do us a pleasure, though it be but a meals meat, we will be thankful for it, relate of it : but if he shall be a means to save our life, as from sword, fire, water, and the like ; O then we will go on our hands and knees to do him good. Well, God is our best friend, and we are most beholden unto him, yea more then to all the world ; and therefore let us labour with our own hearts to be thankful : and because many can purpose to give God thanks in words and with their lips, let us know it is not enough in words to praise God, and say, *Thanks be to God* ; but we must labour in life to shew our thankfulness, when as we labour to honour God, when as we seek to do his will and to serve

serve him, and are loth to offend so merciful and bountiful a God. For if a man shall make shew in words that he is grateful, and yet live in sin, there is no thankful heart in him. And that we may the better be stirred up to do this, let us know there is no better way to move the Lord to continue his love and mercy unto us, than when we do freely acknowledg his mercy, and are thankful for it ; as we see, if we give a small thing to a poor body, if they be thankful, to speake of it, and to confess it, it will provoke us to do them great favours, and say, " alas, he is thankful, it is well bestowed on him, he is worthy of a better turn : So as to be thankful for one good turn is to crave another. And therefore let us remember this duty, it is comly, it is all the Lord requires of us, and is the way to procure a new mercy at God's hands."

Let us then take heed of that foul fault of unthankfulness, when as men can be content to devour God's mercies from day to day, and never render him any thanks ; like the Swine under the Tree, that eats the Acorns, and never looks whence they come : so many wicked men devour the mercies of God, and never open their mouths ; like unto the nine Lepers, whereof not one returned back to praise God.

The causes of unthankfulness : First, men consider not the greatness, number, and continuance of God's mercies, and therefore they imagine themselves more beholden to a natural man for a meals meat, than to God for all his mercies.

Se-

4/8 2.

Luke 17.

Causes of
unthank-
fulness.

Ps. 103. 2. Secondly, forgetfulness of his mercies, when men let them pass away, and never be affected with them.

Thirdly, the hardness of mans heart, which is not touched nor affected with the great blessings of God.

Well, let us beware of this sin, which is so odious, that the Heathen men would rather be accused of any sin, than this sin of ungratefulness.

Secondly, by ungratefulness we deprive our selves of many other mercies; for as gratefulness for an old is the beginning of a new; so ungratefulness for an old favour is the next way, to deprive us of a new.

VERSE X VI.

For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it thee, &c.

The Prophet David having professed that it was his earnest desire to honour God, to praise him, and seek his glory; confesseth that he hath no other means but to speak of his mercy, and to be willing to set forth the same: To become a preacher of his righteousness and goodness. And he confesseth (to his comfort) that the Lord is more delighted with this, than with all those external ceremonies and sacrifices which the people of the Jews did offer, and thought by them to please God, and to affwage his anger, and procure pardon of their sins thereby.

So

So that the main scope of these two verses is this, to shew, *David*, though he had nothing in the world to require the Lord's mercy unto him, yet he persuaded himself, upon his true repentance, the Lord would accept of his earnest desire to honour him, and to set forth his praise.

In the 16 verse he shews what are those sacrifices which the Lord cares not for, and desireth not outward sacrifices alone, which men offer without faith and repentance, and whereby they think to appease his anger, and merit pardon of their sins by the same.

In the 17 verse he shews what are the best sacrifices we can offer unto God, which he will accept of for Christ's sake, and where-with he is well pleased: *A broken and contrite heart*, truly wounded and humbled for sin, and which doth by faith embrace Jesus Christ, who alone is the propitiatory Sacrifice to appease his Father's anger, and to work our atonement and reconciliation with God.

Thou despisest not sacrifice.

The Sacrifices of the Jews were of two sorts, some propitiatory, to procure favour at God's hands for the pardon of sin; some gratulatory, which were only for thanksgiving for blessings received. Now of these David speaks here especially.

And of Sacrifices for thanksgiving were two sorts; some were called Sacrifices, as the first word signifies, where some Beast was slain and offered in Sacrifice to God.

Again,

Sacrifices
of the
Jews of
two sorts.

Again, some were called Burnt-offerings, which were all consumed, and turned into ashes; and they were called so, because the smoak of them ascended up to heaven: and both of them were figures of Christ Jesus, who should be slain and burned, as it were, in the fire of God's anger, for our sins.

Ques. But how can the Lord be said not to desire burnt-offerings and sacrifices, seeing he commanded them in his Law?

Answe. We must not think the Prophet speaks here simply, that the Lord cares not for Sacrifices: for as yet the Ceremonies of the Law were in force, and the greatest part of God's worship stood in Sacrifices; and David himself, and Solomon, were diligent, and not sparing in performing this duty.

But we must know, David speaks here, first, that the Lord careth not for Sacrifices as they were done of the common people of the Jews, because that whereas the Lord did ordain them as helps to lead them to Christ, that they might deny themselves, and see they were worthy to die when the Beast was slain; so they might seek to be saved by the everlasting Sacrifice of Christ alone. But they began to imagine that by their very offering of beasts in Sacrifice, God was pleased, never looking to Christ Jesus, whereof they were but types and figures.

Secondly, because the people of the Jews did offer them without faith and repentance, with impenitent hearts; and thought so long as they offered sacrifice, though they lived in sin, it skilled not.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, the Lord delights not, nor is so well pleased with this outward sacrifice, as with a broken and contrite heart, when this is humbled and mourns for sin, believeth in Christ Jesus, and is careful to honour God by his holy life.

Seeing David affirmeth, that God cares not for outward sacrifice when the inward is wanting, we learn, That though a man should perform all the outward service and worship of God, and that in never so glorious a manner, yet if the heart be not affected and purified, all is in vain, the Lord cares not for it; as to preach the Word, to hear it, to receive the Sacrament, &c. If there be not a broken heart for sin, a repentant heart, a sanctified heart, all is but vain. The Scribes and Pharisees seemed marvellous precise in outward shew, very zealous and forward; yet their hearts were puffed up with pride, self-love, malice, covetousness, &c. And therefore Christ saith, Unless your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of heaven. Judas in outward shew preached and prayed as well as others; yet a very devil, a most traitorous wretch, full of hypocrisy, covetousness, and bloody cruelty. Well, we see, though men make never so good and fair a shew, yet if the heart be not found, all is in vain, and from the teeth outward, and God cares not for it; he esteemeth as much of their sacrifices, as if they should kill a man, or sacrifice a dog, which is abomination to the Lord.

This

Doct. 6.
A man's person must first be approved before his sacrifice be accepted.

Jer. 24. 20.
Ps. 29. 13.
Mate. 5. 8.
5. 12.
5. 13.
Mat. 5. 10.

Ez. 66. 3.

*Vise 1.*Pro. 26. 9.
Ps. 50. 16.

This may serve to cut the combs of all those which be proud hypocrites, and all they do is in outward appearance: alas! their praying, preaching, hearing, it is but swine's blood, dogg's blood, a beautiful abomination: and therefore let us never content our selves with the outward worship and service of God, but let us labour to do all in truth, with faith, obedience, repentance, humiliation, and good conscience.

*Vise 2.*Ez. 1. 11,
12, 13.
Jer. 7. 8.Dott. 2.
A man may perform a good duty, and yet sin in the manner of doing it.

This condemns all the blind devotions of ignorant and prophanie sinners, who think that so long as they offer their outward Sacrifice, come to Church, hear the Word, receive the Sacrament, &c. they may live in sin, and yet please God. And this was the very cause why the Lord abhorred the *Jews* Sacrifices. And may not the Lord even now abhor our Sacrifices, our coming to Church, hearing, praying, &c. Seeing men do content themselves with outward actions, and come with sinful hearts and affections.

We learn hence, that a man may perform duties which God hath commanded, and yet not please God; but sin most grievously in doing of them. To offer Sacrifice, it is God's own commandment, but when people shall do it in an evil manner, either without faith and repentance, or else to an evil end, to merit at God's hands; then it maketh that which God commands to be a sin to them, not in it self, but to them that fail in the manner of doing it. To offer Sacrifice was the commandment of God, but when the *Jews* thought by their Sacrifices to appease God's

God's anger, without the Sacrifice of Christ, they sinned, and God abhorred them, and cared not for them. Again, to preach the word of God is his commandment, but when *Judas* shall preach the word, to hide his covetousness and treacherous heart, it is a sin in *Judas*. To give our alms, it is a thing commanded, and a sacrifice wherewith God is well pleased; but if men shall give to merit, and to be seen of men, the Lord careth not for it. So as we see a man may do things which God commands men to do, and yet be so far from pleasing God, that they shall sin and provoke him to anger, because they do them not in an holy order, in faith, repentance, obedience, and zeal of the Lord's glory.

This condemns almost the whole service of God amongst the Papists, who do all to this end, to merit and deserve at God's hands pardon for sin, and freedom from punishment; but this is to a wrong end: we must do good deeds, not to merit, but to honour God, to give good example, and to make our calling sure to our selves.

This must admonish us all, not only to do what God commands, as to preach the Word, hear, pray, receive the Sacrament, &c. but to do it as God commands, or else he abhors all we do; unless we do them in faith, repentance, and obedience, all is in vain.

If the Lord abhors those sacrifices which he commands, for man's offence; how much more those sinful sacrifices which have been invented by man, without any warrant from his

Prov. 15.
11.

Use 1.

use 2.

Doff.
Popish sa-
crifices a-
bominable

his Word, as the Idol of the Mass, Popish Pilgrimage, Perpetual chastity, Voluntary poverty, living in a Cloister, &c. &c.

Use 1.

Well then, let us take heed, not only that we do not abuse those Sacrifices which the Lord commands, by our evil doing and performing of them; but much more, that we be not so bold, at any time, to offer unto the Lord such Sacrifices as are condemned in the word of God, no offer with strange fire, as Nadab and Abihu, and such as Paul calls *Hill-sacrifice*, and Christ calls *The invention of man*; for these the Lord abhors.

Use 2.

It condemns that bloody and beastly sacrifice of the Papists, who offer in the Mass Christ daily for the quick and dead, an horrible abuse of Christ Jesus: For Christ hath by his own sufficient sacrifice of his body and blood upon the Cross appeased his Fathers anger for the sins of the World; and put an end to all those sacrifices; and if they offer up Christ in the Mass for quick and dead, then Christ's sacrifice was imperfect, that must be patched up with that abominable Idol.

Concerning those sacrifices which were lambs, sheep, goats, or bullocks, and were all slain and offered to God in fire, let us mark, that they were all so many figures, types, and shapes of that everlasting Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which he offered upon the Cross in his own person.

Then this doth commend unto us that blessed and most meritorious Sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God, seeing there were so many prophecies of it, even from the be-

Doct. 4.
Christian
end of all
other sac-
rifices.

beginning of the world, and so many shadows and types of it, as cannot be numbered, because they never passed one day amongst the Jews, from the time of the Law till Christ's coming, but they offered at least Morning and Evening Sacrifice, as shadows of Christ Jesus to come; and the people of God, the believing Jews, and Holy Fathers and Prophets, did in them behold Jesus Christ, as slain and crucified before their eyes. And as Christ faith, *The holy Patriarchs and Prophets, and famous Kings, desired to see my day, and would be glad to see it, and yet saw it not.*

Well, seeing the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ is so excellent and meritorious, of endless worth to procure God's favour to us, how often should we think upon it, never let it depart out of our minds? And to this end we should be more willing to approach and come to the Supper of the Lord, that so there, as it were in a plain Table and Picture, and not painted on a wooden Cross, as the Papists do, we might behold Christ crucified, and his blood shed for our sins, so often as we see the Bread broken, the Wine poured out: *So often as ye do it, do it in remembrance of me, to shew forth my death till I come.*

Vsi 1.

1 Cor. 11.

For, the remembrance of Christ's Sacrifice it is a sweet comfort to all wounded and distressed souls; it is Sack and Sugar to all them that truly believe in him; it is an excellent means to kill sin, and to humble our hard hearts, that we should remember, our sins

signs were as the bloody nails and the spear which put him to death; and a powerful bridle to restrain us from sin, because so often as we sin, we do, as it were, pierce his heart afresh: and as for those that care not for coming to the Sacrament, nor yet for the Word, wherein Christ is lively crucified, they shew they have no benefit by this Sacrifice of Christ.

VERSE XVII.

The sacrifices of God are a contrite spirit, A contrite and broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

David having shewed what be those Sacrifices wherein the Lord hath no pleasure, namely, such as men shall offer with hope to merit, or without faith or repentance?

Now he shews what is the Sacrifice wherein the Lord takes great delight, and is well pleased; and that is, in one word, a broken spirit, a heart truly wounded for sin.

In this same verse let us first find out what is the broken and contrite spirit. Secondly, the commendations of it, namely, it is called the Sacrifice of God. Thirdly, that he doth not despise.

By a broken and contrite spirit is meant, such an heart as is truly humbled with the sight of sin, wounded and pierced with the fear

feare of God's anger, grieved for offending so merciful a God, and loving a Father, and doth beg for mercy at his hands as for life and death: besides the endless mercy of God in Christ our Saviour, which breaketh the heart of a poor sinner.

So then, there be two things that wound and bruise the heart of sinners; first, the sight of sin, and knowledge of our misery by reason thereof. Secondly, the endless mercy of God in Christ, so as it cuts us at the heart to remember that we have offended so good and merciful a Father.

Seeing this is that broken heart which is thus bruised with the sight of sin, and is humbled for them; yea, hath a most low conceit of it self as most vile and unworthy; we shall see that it is a most rare thing to be found; for generally men are so blinded with self-love, that they see nothing, or feel nothing to humble them, or bruise their stony hearts, but are like the Church of *Ephesus*. For this is ever a fellow of hardness of heart, and cause of all ignorance of our misery. Men are like those that be sick of a Lethargy, which is a deadly disease, and incurable. This hardness of heart it is the common judgment of God upon our people, it reigns every where. How often hath God knockt at the doors of our eyes by his judgments? at the doors of our ears by his justice? at the doors of our heart by his word and commandments? and we will not turn to him by our repentance; which if we do not, he then will turn us into hell for our forgetfulness.

Dodg. I.
Broken
heart, a
most rare
thing to
be found.

Rev. 3. 14.
Eph. 4. 18.

ness. Nor must we have qualms of sin, or when we are offered time of piety and repentence, like a weather-cock, turn to sin again, and be never at a certain rest we should be condemned for ever to hell for our inconstancy; therefore let us beseech the Lord that the time to come may be a time for our re-pentance for our sins past.

Seeing that this contrite heart is so rare and hard to be found; and the hard heart is so common, and so dangerous a fore-runner of Hell, O let us look to our selves, how we find our hearts broken and bruised with the sense of our sins, mourn for them, and bewail them. Alas, it is wonderful to see poor souls how men lie in sin, see nothing, and fear nothing, nor complain of nothing: Men can complain of the stone in the reins, and cry-out with grief, but no man complains of the stone in the heart, they feel no such grief, though it be deadly and dangerous: And if thou findest thy heart hardened, so as thou art not touched and troubled with the sight of sin, of God's vengeance, of hell and damnation, that thou canst not mourn for them, that thou fearest not God's judgments, and art not affected with his mercies, to mourn for thy sins: O know thy estate is fearful and miserable, thou art in extreme danger to perish, and be damned for ever.

Seeing a hard heart is so fearful a judgment of God, and fore-runner of hell; let us use all good means for the breaking of the heart; and to this end we must labour to know the Law of God, how we break it daily;

ly in thought, word and deed ; we must know the curse of God due to sin, that *the wages of sin is death*. And because the preaching of the Word is the most excellent means to work this, and is the Lord's hammer to crush in pieces our stony heart, let us attend that. And lastly, let us make much of God's mercy in Christ, that so his mercy, patience, long-suffering, &c. may be a special means to bruise our hearts ; that we have sinned against him.

Let us take heed of pride of heart, to think too well of our selves ; for this is certain, where men and women think too well of themselves, there is hardness of heart, and where hardness of heart is, there is pride of heart ; for these two go not asunder, and the more proud, the more hard hearted, and the more hard-hearted the more proud ; and therefore if thy heart be humbled indeed, bruised for sin, there will follow a very low and base estimation of our selves, to think more basely and meanly of our selves than any man can do.

The second point is the praise and commendation of such a sacrifice : namely, that the Prophet doth not only call it the sacrifice of God; that is, most excellent, and such as God loves and likes, but also he calls it sacrifices, in the plural number, *The sacrifices of God*; for it is not in vain that he speaks in the plural number, and the meaning is this, to shew that a heart broken and bruised for sins is instead of all other sacrifices whatsoever ; and let men offer what sacrifice they

Ro. 2. 12.
Ps. 40. 12.

use 3.

1 Tim. I.
15.

will never so many, costly or excellent, yet if this be wanting, it is but in vain, God esteems not of it; one broken heart is more worth than a thousand sacrifices of great price. *

Instruct.

This may admonish every one to take heed that we do not offer nor present the Lord with any other sacrifice but this, which is instead of all, and more worth than a thousand offered by hard-hearted sinners, which are no better than Hypocrites and dissemblers with God, which make a fair outward shew, and come like *Judas*, saying, *Hail, Master*, only to betray him, and undo their own souls, both in this life and in the world to come. For if a man offer many sacrifices, pray much, preach much, hear much, receive the Sacrament often; yet if the heart be not broken, humbled and bruised, alas, all is in vain, God esteems them as of no effect; we cannot please him without a broken and contrite spirit.

Secondly, wouldest thou offer unto God a most precious sacrifice, that might be instead of all the rest, and make all the rest acceptable? O then present him with this broken heart. The poor woman that cast into the Treasury but two mites, cast in more than all the rest, because it came from a heart truly humbled; and so, if thou wouldest have thy praying, preaching, hearing, &c. please God, then present the Lord with a broken heart,

heart, which is instead of all other sacrifices, and makes them all acceptable; and without this, all is abominable unto the Lord.

Thou wilt not despise.

THAT is, thou dost love, and like, and art well pleased with it, that is, with a broken heart and contrite Spirit.

Hence we learn, That God doth well and highly esteem of, and love that man or woman which is of a broken and contrite heart; like *Josias*, whose heart was melted; when as the heart is broken with sight of sin, and sense of God's anger, and withal doth embrace Jesus Christ for pardon and forgiveness;

Here is matter of endless comfort to poor distressed souls, whose hearts are wounded and bruised for their sins, melt and mourn for them, feel the burthen of them, and bewail them; thou art dear unto God, he loves thee, and likes thee, and hath respect unto thee, and he will comfort thee, and deliver thee. Look on *Josias*, that godly King, on the poor Publican, on *Mary Magdalene*, on the Canaanitish woman, and on every child of God, how the Lord hath refreshed them in their distress.

Seeing the Lord doth not despise a broken and contrite spirit, a distressed soul and wounded conscience, he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax; then let no man or woman that is of a contrite spirit be out of heart, as though the

Doct. 2.
God doth
highly e-
steem of a
broken
heart.
2 Kings
12. 19.
Luke 19..
Esa. 66.
Es. 57. 5.

Lord hated them; and regarded them not ; no, no, let them rather know that the Lord loves them, and likes them, that they are dear unto him. It is a wonderful comfort to God's poor children, Oh! they find and feel the heavy weight of sin, and groan under it, so as they think the Lord loves them not, but rather hates them ; truly it is not so, the Lord loves them, and they are more dear unto him. It is not a voluntary Pilgrimage, nor a bald head, nor only beating the breast will serve the turn ; no, it must be sorrow and grief, a contrite and an humble spirit that the Lord doth accept of, and those are they which the Lord will not despise : as, *Esa. 57. 13.* God himself saith, *He will dwell in the humble and meek spirit, and will raise up that soul which is cast down;* &c.

Ps. 33. I.

VERSE XVIII. XIX.

Be favourable unto Sion for thy good pleasure : build up the Walls of Jerusalem.
Then shalt thou accept the sacrifice of righteousness, even the burnt-offering and oblation ! then shall they offer Calves upon thine Altar.

The second part of the Psalm, containing a Prayer for the Church.

Hitherto we have heard of the first part of this worthy Psalm, wherein David hath put up sundry petitions and requests unto God, for the pardon of his sins, and turning away his fearful judgments.

Now

Now in these two last verses, *David* is mindful of the Church and people of God ; and because he had by his sins not only endangered his own soul, but also laid open the Church and people of God to great misery, and done what lay in him (as he was a King, and Judge of the Land) to draw the curse and judgment of God upon them : therefore he doth humbly intreat the Lord to be merciful to his Church, and not to plague and punish them, as he might have done; both for his sins and disobedience.

These two verses contain in them two special points to be considered of by us.

First, the Request which *David* makes in behalf of the Church and people of God,
verst. 18.

Secondly, the Reason taken from the vow and protestation which *David* and the people make unto God, namely, to offer unto God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

In the Prayer be two Requests : first, he prays for mercy and favour to be shewed unto the Church of God.

Secondly, that the Lord would repair that breach which he had made by his sins.

Be favourable.

That is, Do well, bless, preserve, and shew mercy to *Sion*. *Sion* signifies that beautiful Temple of *Jerusalem*, but here it is taken for the Church and people of God ; as if he should say, O Lord, I do not only intreat thee that thou wouldest have mercy

upon me, but I beseech thee shew mercy to thy whole Church and people, who were plagued for David's sin ; for you may read, in the second Book of Samuel, when he saw the plague, he cried out, *O Lord, what have these sheep done ? Lay the punishment upon me, and upon my father's house, rather than upon them, for they have done nothing.* Therefore he desires the Lord to be merciful unto them, that his Word may be preached, and his Name called upon : for I acknowledg, O Lord, that I have done, as much as lay in my power, to bring heavy judgments upon thy Church and people, if any sins be laid upon them. But Lord, let not thy Spouse be punished for my sin ; *O be favourable unto Sian.*

Doct. I.
Prayer the
chiefest re-
fuge in the
ime of
danger.

Ps. 122.
Ps. 60.
Ps. 107.
Heb. 1. 8.
Esa. 64.
2 Chr. 32.

Seeing David in time of misery, when the Church was in great danger of God's judgments, betakes himself to prayer, to intreat the Lord for grace and favour, we learn hence, That this is our chiefest refuge and shelter in the time of misery and affliction, when the Church of God is in danger of any judgment or calamity, even to betake our selves to humble and earnest prayer. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.* It is a great blessing for a Kingdom to enjoy peace, for peace on earth makes it like to heaven. And of the Israelites it is reported, that they cried five times for peace unto the Lord in their distress. So in Egypt they cryed unto the Lord ; so they fasted and prayed when Haman had got the Kings Letter to put the Jews to death.

The like we may see in Nehemiah, Nehem.

1, 3. when he heard that the people returned from captivity, were still in misery, *Jerusalem trodden down*; he sate down and wept; he mourned, fasted, and prayed before the Lord God of heaven for the redress of those evils. This appeareth likewise, *Psal. 137.*

1, 2, 3. Where the Prophet layeth plainly down the miserable estate of the Church under the *Babylonians*, and the afflictions of the Church conceived upon that distress: *We sate down and wept when we remembred thee, O Sion. If I forgot thee (O Jerusalem) let my right hand forget her cunning; yea, if I prefer not thee, Jerusalem, before my chiefest joy.*

And in the first of *Samuel 4. 19.* it is noted unto the everlasting praise of the wife of *Phineas*, that when the *Philistines* prevailed over the people of God, and one trouble came upon her on the neck of another, as the taking of the Ark, the fall of her father, the death of her husband, and the overthrow of the Host, &c. yet above all, the report of taking the Ark of the Lord, it was a wound unto her soul, hastned her travel, and called her child *Ichabod*, that is, no glory, or the glory is departed from Israel, because the Ark was taken.

Well, if the Lord should afflict us, and should threaten to destroy us, to remove the Gospel, to take away his Zealous and faithful Ministers, to make the golden Bells of *Aaron* yield no sound; what are we to do? Namely, this must be our refuge, we must fly unto God by true and hearty prayer, bewail our sins, acknowledge and truly confess them

Use 1.

Jam. 5.

them to God, ply the Lord with prayers and tears, for the prayer of a righteous man is of exceeding force. Now if the prayer of one righteous man be of that force and strength, how much more available are the prayers of hundreds or thousands, that are gathered together in one? One cord may easily be broken; but a three-fold cord cannot easily be broken. *Elias* is called the chariot and horsemen of *Israel*, because by faithful prayers which he had made unto God, he could do more for the defence of God's holy Church, than an army of soldiers.

Seeing the troubles of others must move pity in our selves, then woe unto them that are secure; that laugh when the Church weepeth, that live in bravery, when as the Church is in sackcloth and ashes; that feast, when the Church doth fast. This was the practice of those that lived in the time of *Esay*, ch. 22. 12, 13, 15. In that day did the Lord of hosts call unto weeping and mourning, to baldness and girding with sackcloth: and behold, joy and gladness, slaying of oxen, and killing of sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine, for to morrow we shall dye.

Hereunto accordeth that of the Prophet *Amos*, Amos 6. Woe to them that are at ease in Sion, &c. Where we see he pronounceth the woful estate and condition of those who lived without regard of the judgments of God laid upon the Church. And certainly, the times wherein we live do call upon us to the practice of this heavenly and christian duty.

But

But much more are they condemned, that are so far from pitying the Churches troubles, that rather (without all natural affection, as if they were born of Wolves, or nourished of Tygers) seek to cut the throat of the Church, add unto her afflictions, and make the burthen heavier, even of them that are ready to fall. This doth the Prophet speak of such. Ps. 96. 20. *They persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and add unto the sorrow of them whom thou hast wounded.*

In that the Prophet *David* doth not pray for himself alone, but is mindful of the whole Church and people of God, and therefore prays for them, that God would bless them, and defend them : Hence we do observe, that it is the duty of every Christian man and woman, that be true members of the Church of God, not only to pray for themselves, but also to pray unceasantly for the Church of God, that God would be favourable to his people, bless his children, and seek the welfare of God's Church.

This we may see by the example of *Abraham*, Gen. 18. who prayed for the *Sodomites*, that they might be spared, This we may see in *Nehemiah*, Nehem. 1. 4. who mourned, fasted and prayed unto the God of Heaven, when he saw that the Church was in misery. And this affection, was in *David*, when he said, Ps. 137. *We sat down and wept when we remembered thee. O Sion.* And when the people desired *Samuel* to pray for them, I Sam. 12. 32. he said, *God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, and cease praying for you.*

Doct. 4.
Prayer
for the
Church, a
Christian
duty.

This Paul performed to the Romans, Rom. 1. 9. 10. God is my witness (whom I serve in my spirit in the Gospel of his Son) that without ceasing I make mention of you in my prayers. We must pray at all-times, and in all places; in the Ægyptian Palace with Joseph, in the Babylonish Court with Isatob, in the Whales belly with Jonas, on the solitary Mount with our Saviour, with Peter in prison, with Paul on the Sea-shore, and with Sylas in the stocks. And therefore let us pray (my beloved) with unfeigned hearts, and with elevated spirits, that our devotions may mount the Heavens, to God the Father, for the peace of Jerusalem; and for our reward, it is here promised to those that do it, that they shall prosper.

So that we see here It hath been the practice of the Church and the people of God, to pray for the Church of God, and that indeed for sundry reasons.

Pt. 12. 22.

First, it is God's commandment, that we should pray for the Church of God; Pray for the Church or peace of Jerusalem, that is, for the good and flourishing estate of God's Church and people.

Secondly, as it is God's commandment, so it is for our own good, because we shall fare the better for the common good of God's Church: They shall prosper that love thee.

Thirdly, we are or should be members of the Church of God, whereof Christ is the only head. Now then, members of one and the same body should procure the good one of another; and therefore if it still go

til

ill with the Church of God, it cannot go well with us.

How did Moses plead with God sundry times for his Church and people? So Nehemiah, he fasted, and prayed for the Church in misery, and for the City of his Fathers, *Jerusalem*.

And as it is the duty of all in general to pray, and procure the peace and prosperity of God's Church, and his people; so especially ought Kings and Magistrates, who are the Governors and Leaders of God's people, and his Lieutenants upon earth. Secondly, Ministers are bound to pray for God's Church, and the peace of *Jerusalem*, which is the object of our prayers.

Now, there be three sorts of peace which we must pray for: First, the peace of Conscience: Secondly, the peace of the World: Thirdly, the peace of Heaven. Now, we may read, in *Matthew*, how the Devils themselves have a peace; for when Christ came and did appear to them, they cryed out, *what have we to do with thee, O thou Jesus, art thou come to torment us before our time?* which shews they have some peace, though Devils. Then there is a second peace, which is wished by all people, which was denounced at our Saviours birth by the Angels, saying, *Peace on earth, and good will towards men.* But the chiefeſt peace that we must pray for, is the peace of Heaven, where is comfort and diversity of pleasure: God is the Author of peace, because of his Majesty and of his glory. Thirdly, peace on earth, which

Ex. 23.

which is the preparation to happiness ; and peace must be first obtained and had, before we can enter into glory : then peace and charity and hope will cease, but love and glory never shall have an end, but be permanent, and of eternal durance. This peace which David desires is for his own people, and for Jerusalem's sake, that great City. O pray for the peace of Jerusalem, which is an act of charity : then it follows, they shall prosper that love it, there is the blessing promised to those which pray for the Church of Jerusalem.

For Sion's sake, I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof break forth as the light, and the salvation thereof as a burning lamp. I have set a watchman upon the walls, O Jerusalem, which all the day and all night continually shall not cease. Ye that are mindful of the Lord keep not silence.

Verse 6.

Verse 3.

Act. 9. I.

If this be the duty of all men, to labour to procure the welfare and happiness of God's Church and people ; then most woful is the estate of all those that hinder the true worship and service of God, when wicked men (like to bloody Saul) shall breath out threatening and slaughter to the Church of God. Well, we shall read in the Word of God, as also in the Acts and Monuments, we shall ever find the ends of Persecutors to be exceeding horrible, and very fearful ; some of them were stricken down with present death, some dying desperately, and despairing of God's mercy, some run mad, and other

other the like fearful ends. Which might admonish all persecuting Tyrants, and bloody enemies of the Church, to alter and change their cruelties, and no more to persecute the poor Church and Children of God, lest they be plagued in like manner.

Be favourable.

THAT is, so bless thy poor Spouse, that in it thy Servants the holy Prophets, may ever preach thy sacred Word, that thy Worship and Service may sincerely be performed, and thy Name called upon; the number of the Elect may be increased, and many Souls saved. Hence we learn, That it is the great favour and mercy of God to any Church or People, when the Word and Gospel of God is soundly and sincerely preached, and the Sacraments duly administered: when the people may with liberty and comfort come together to sanctifie God's Sabbath, to call on the Lord in his Sanctuary, to worship the Lord in his holy House.

And surely we do see here, what great cause we have to bless the holy Name of God in this Land, how gracious the Lord hath been unto us above all Nations that are round about us.

So, on the contrary part, it is a great and grievous judgment of God to want faithful Ministers and holy servants of God; when God shall cause the golden Bells of *Aaron* to cease, it is a token of God's displeasure with any People, Town or Kingdom; then the Lord

Deut. 3.
Liberty of
preaching
one of
God's fa-
vours.

**Amos 8.
11.
Rev. 2.**

Uſe 1.

Uſe 2.

Prov. 29.

Lord frowns upon them, and is exceeding angry with them ; and then wo to that Nation or Country, when the Lord departs from them, when he shall take away their watchmen, when he shall deprive them of their faithful Ministers, when he shall take away his Word and Gospel. The Lord threatens this as the greatest of all judgments : then comes in sin, ignorance, profaneness, impiety, idolatry, superstition, and all manner of sin, till the Lord come with his judgments to destroy them.

Seeing it is so great a token of the Lord's disfavour, of his anger and displeasure against any Church or Kingdom, O then, let us repent of our sins, let us intreat the Lord, not to bring this judgment upon us, but rather to humble us by any other means, as it pleaseth his Majesty.

This condemns a plain dotage, and foolish dream of ignorant persons : O (say some) it was never a good World since we had so much preaching ; but in time of Popery, then all things were cheap. And so they gather by outward peace and tranquility, that God loved them, and liked of them. But we see here, howsoever many poor souls may deceive themselves, it is a singular favour of God to people, when he gives them his Gospel to be truly preached and taught to them, when they may call upon him in publick and private, this is a special favour of God : but when this is wanting, where prophecies fail, the people perish. For where the Word of God is not preached, and the peo-

people taught, there they are ignorant, blind, and prophanes, and all manner of iniquity abounds, and where sin abounds, there the curse of God must needs hang over the heads of that people. For where the Word is not preached, and the people taught, though they abound in all prosperity, yet it is not so great a favour as they think it to be, nay; it may be a judgment unto them; for what are they the better to have peace and plenty, ease and liberty, when they want the favour of the Almighty? for every benefit is not a blessing.

According to thy good pleasure.

These words contain the ground of his request, namely, the endless mercy and favour of God in Jesus Christ, not any goodness or worthiness of their own, of David, or the people; but he builds his faith and petition on God's meer mercy in Christ.

Hence we learn, That we must build our faith, not upon any goodness, desert, or worthiness of our own, but upon the alone mercy and good pleasure of God, Dan. 9. He doth confess, it is true, that they dare not appear in their own name or worthiness, but only in the mercy of God in Christ: *To us belongs shame and confusion of face; but, Lord, for thy tender mercies sake bear us.*

When the Church of God was in great affliction, they acknowledg'd it the Lord's great mercy they were not consumed for their sins, *Because his compassions fail not.* So then let

*Deut. 4.
Faith must
not rest
upon o-
thers me-
rits.*

Dan. 4.

Lam. 3.22.

Vſt. I.

let us know that we must lay this ground of all our prayers, even on God's endless mercy in Christ, not our own worthiness.

This condemns all such pride as the Papists are guilty of, when they do lean so much upon their own merits, worthiness, and deserts, and think God shoule hear them, and help them for the same; yea, they make Saints and Angels Mediators: whereas we must rely only on God's mercy in Christ for all good things.

Vſt. 2.

Seeing David doth build his faith and prayer upon God's mercy alone, without any respect to his own worthiness, or goodness of the people, we learn, in all our prayers to rely wholly on God's mercy, and not think that we are worthy to be heard for our own worthiness or deserts: no, no, let us confess and say, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory:* for we are not worthy of the least favour.

Note.

Many of us, when we are at our prayers in the Church, are led away with a world of fancies, and mingle our devotions with the cares and thoughts of the world, and instead of lifting up our hearts and hands to God, to beg mercy and forgiveness for our sins, we lift up our eyes to see what new fashions we can espy: and if not so, then we hold up our heads on high, thereby we shew our pride; or otherwise, on our elbows, are sleeping in our pews or seats: but let me tell those that sleep in the House of God, in the time of Divine Service or Sermon, they are dead to God already, and the Preacher

Preacher (may be supposed to be) preaching their Funeral Sermons. O let us take heed we be not overtaken with any of these infirmities, or if we are, or have been, let us strive earnestly and speedily to forsake them, lest we be suddenly taken away by the hand of death, as was *Herod* and *Ananias*, &c. Therefore let us watch with the Lord one hour by prayer, and especially upon his own day, and his own house ; for prayer is an antidote against all the poisonous darts and incitements of Satan, it elevates our thoughts and meditations on better things than ever we can here enjoy, it takes away our affections from the vain and momentary delights of this wicked world, and by the grace of God may be a means to strengthen us against the strongest assaults of Satan, to his utter ruine of us. For if Satan but once perceived that we begin to have but a thought of prayer, he then steals away presently, and dares not approach to attempt us. I can assure you, prayer is powerful, profitable, and delectable ; powerful it is, for it is the key of God's Cabinet, which opens the blessings of God to man, it is a cure for all diseases, and a remedy against all despairs ; for in the depth of all sorrows, nothing is so comfortable or profitable as prayer, steers and keeps the heart in the right way from many other inconveniences, and evil imaginations, for our bodies are the cages of unclean birds, when indeed they ought to be the Temples of the holy Ghost : nor are the best of our actions but unjust, and our devotions

Exbor.

vorious only eloquence of words, mingled with worldly cares and distracted thoughts. O let us remember this, that our consciences cannot die with us, nor yet die within us, but will arise and open it self at last, though our sins were never so secretly and closely kept or hid from the eyes of man, yet the All-seeing Eye of God; by our own consciences, shall witness against us. Therefore let us pray for a heart of repentance now in the time of grace and under the Gospel. It was the saying of that old Practitioner St. Paul, *Pray continually,* (faith he) and it should be our daily prayer, Lord so strengthen us, that our prayers may be effectual before thee. To pray twice a day every man ought to do; this he may do, more he can do, less he cannot do. Let us therefore every morning sacrifice our first-born unto God, that is, our first thoughts; and in the evening our last thoughts: our prayers do circumvent Satan's incursions. It is prayers which pleases God, and our prayers are as so many cords which binds us to the horns of the Altar. O how many men can swear by their faith, which never pray by their faith; and when they go to bed and rise again, never acknowledg God's mercy to be renewed unto them, but like a dog shake their ears and so fall to drinking, and eating, and swearing. O that men were as full of getting grace, as many men are desirous to get wealth; but most men in these our sinful and latter days pray for riches, seek after lands, pursue honour and pleasure, projecting and beating their

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their brains how to increase riches, which are the fading blossoms of the earth; whilst in the mean time (like the rich man in the Gospel) which had all things at his command, his barns full, one, of corn, and the other of sin: but observe what became of him for all his riches, he went to bed, but he never awaked again, for that very night his soul was taken from him. None of God's children we ever read of did so, their prayers were otherwise, it cost them many sighs and tears to have the knowledg of God, and of their sins, thereby to subdue the corruptions of their bodies, and to have dominion over the World, and the inticements thereof. This was David's prayer and supplication to God, to pray him in his good time and pleasure to build up the walls of Jerusalem, that is, the breaches and divisions of the Church, which was torn and rent by reason of his sins. Prayer overcomes, but prayer was never overcome. Hezekiah's prayer shall prevail, Elias his desires granted, the Ninivites repentance caused, showers of mercy, instead of vials of wrath: this makes us to have strength and power, as further when we see, prayer stops the mouth of Lyons, as it did when Daniel was flung into their Den: it is as Sampson's lock, which pulls the whole house upon the Philistines heads; It can make a Prison a Palace, as it did to Joseph; it can open the Prison door, as it did to Peter; it can divide the Sea, and make it like a wall on every side, as it did to the children of Israel.

Prayer,

Prayer, I say, is a messenger of God, it drives away the enemy of our souls; nay, it will subdue our bodily enemies, and mollifie their hard hearts. Prayer doth remove the poison of sin from our souls, and it brings all true joy and comfort to our hearts; it is better than either Oyl or Wine, though with abundance of increase. Therefore, I say, he that will rejoice continually, let him pray without ceasing, that is, as often as he hath opportunity, or, at least, twice a day; for prayer will be no hinderance to any man, no more than a man that is in a journey, and doth alight to refresh himself, or to mend what is amiss. If thou answerest and sayest, thou shalt lose a customer, I will tell thee, thou shalt get grace and favour of God; if thou hinderest thy self in the sale of thy goods and trade, thou shalt get knowledge, and with *Mary in the Gospel* chuse the better part, and receive the greater glory, &c.

O let us spare some time in the morning to pray to our God, and let us entertain with cheerfulness such a custom into our hearts; we have not so great a task imposed upon us, as to take all the pains for our bodies, and none for our souls; unhappy shall he be for ever who prefers his Mammon before his God. He that to keep his body shall sell his soul, shall, when too late, repent so unhappy departure. How fearful a change shall he make, who to gain an applause on Earth, shall lose a reward in Heaven; let us not deceive our selves, only he shall receive

receive a crown in Heaven, who hath been a faithful servant on Earth. Who so doth truly endeavour to be of the Church Militant, shall undoubtedly have a part in the Church triumphant : if we shall follow the works of grace here, we shall never go without the works of glory hereafter, and so I come now to the second part of the verse, which is David's earnest request and prayer to God, *And build up the walls of Jerusalem, &c.*

And build up the Walls of Jerusalem.

His is the second part of the verse, wherein he intreats the Lord not to hinder the building or erecting of his Temple for his sake, but rather to enlarge and make up that same breach which he had broken down by his foul and bloody sins. As if he should say, O Lord, I have by my sins done what lies in my power to hinder thy Church, and to pluck down the wall of thy protection, yea, to lay them open to the Sword, of the enemy, and to all thy judgments. But I pray thee (O Lord) that thou wouldest in mercy make up that breach, *Build up the walls of Jerusalem, the City wherein thy Temple is built, and thy Name is called upon, the seat of thy Worship and Service.*

Doth David confess, that by his sin of adultery and murther he had done what lay in his power, even to pull down the Walls of God's Church and People, even to lay them open to God's judgments, plagues, and punishment.

The second part of the verse.

Doct. 5.
Sins of the Magistrate provoke God's anger very highly.

punishments? Then hence we learn, That the sins of the Prince and Magistrates, and chief Ruler, as Kings, Queens, &c. they do cast the whole People and Kingdom into great danger, and do provoke God's anger against them, and open the floud-gates of God's vengeance : for their sins be as their persons be, and a small sin in a great Magistrate, in a Minister, in a King, is a great spot, and a foul blemish. The Egyptians were all wicked by reason of Pharaoh's transgression. So we see that when Achab sinned, though no great man, yet it brought the curse of God upon all the people. So in the days of Saul, Abah, Joram, and the like ; when such Kings lived in impiety, idolatry, and did so persecute God's People and Prophets, we see in the Word how God did plague both them and their People.

The reason why the sins of the King do inwrap the People in that judgment of God, is this ; because look how the King is, so (for the most part) are the people ; if he be an Idolater, so are they : for look how the King is affected, so be most of his Subjects.

Seeing this is so, that the sin of the Prince, the chief Magistrate, is so great a means to pull down God's judgment upon the whole People, and wrap them up in the like judgment, as we see in David who for his sin of numbering the People seventy thousand were slain : we learn hence that it is a great mercy of God to have such a King

as

Use I.

2 Sam. 24.

as walks with God, is careful to honour God, and to live in his fear; for then he shall not only procure a blessing upon himself, but on all his People and Subjects: and the contrary is a fearful judgment of God upon a Land, when he gives them wicked Kings and Princes.

We learn by the example of *David*, that those who have by their sins hindered the good estate of God's Church and People, whether King, Prince, Magistrate, or Minister, if they do truly repent, they will be as careful to build up the Walls of God's Church again, to pray for it, to procure the good of it. *Saul* did persecute the Church, he sought the ruine of it, and to pluck out the throat of poor Christians, and to suck their blood; but after he was wounded and humbled, he became a Preacher of the Word, and sought to build as fast as ever he pulled down before.

Well then, hast thou heretofore hated God's children, persecuted them, reproached them, sought to hinder the good of God's Church and People, and the Gospel of Christ? If thou dost ever repent, thou must shew it in this, in loving God's children, furthering God's truth, upholding Christ's Kingdom, and glorifying his Gospel; else thou dost never soundly repent. Hast thou by evil examples by a sinful life, by negligence of holy duties, by lewd advice and wicked counsel, drawn and allureth others to sin, and to bring God's judgments upon them? if thou dost truly and earnestly

Pf. 3. 1, 2.

Doct. 6.
A penitent
will seek
to build
up that
which be-
fore he
had pulled
down.

Acts 9.
2 Co. 33.
14.

Wt. 2.

Doc. 7.
A man
cannot
pray till
he repent.

ly repent, thou shalt bewail this sin, and pray for them whom thou hast thus wronged.

Again, out of the whole Verse mark this lesson and instruction well, namely, that *David*, who before durst hardly approach unto God, and open his mouth in prayer for himself, yet now upon his repentance and reconciliation with God, is bold to pray for others, yea, to pray for the whole Church of God. Hence we learn, That as long as a poor mortal man lives in sin without pardon and true repentance, he cannot pray for himself, he cannot, and dares not open his mouth unto God to pray for himself, much less for others ; but when he shall truly repent, turn to God, after he is reconciled to God in Christ, then he can come with much boldness unto God, and pray for himself and others also. *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren* ; shewing, that till he was converted, he could not help or strengthen his brethren.

Seeing before men and women be converted and do repent, and be at peace with God, it is impossible they should pray for others, or do any good : This should first admonish all Ministers of the Word of God to repent, and to be at peace with God, for otherwise it is impossible for them to pray for others, or do any good thing to please God. And though they teach and preach the Word, yet they sin in it, and please not God, and cannot perform one special part of their Office, namely, to pray for God's People effectually.

VERSE

VERSE XIX.

Then shalt thou accept the Sacrifice of Righteousness, even the Burnt-Offering and Oblation; then shall they offer Calves upon thine Altar.

IN this Verse is contained the fruit of God's mercy and favour both to David and the People, and the fruit is double.

First, in regard of God, that he shall then accept, and be well pleased with their sacrifices.

Secondly, in regard of David and the People, they vow and covenant with the Lord to offer praise and thanks unto God for so great a favour and blessing.

Then shalt thou accept the Sacrifice.

AS if he should say, O Lord, when thou shalt thus be favourable to thy poor Spouse the Church, and forgive my hainous offences, and make good that breach which is broken by my filthy sins; then shall thy mercy be seen, in that thou shalt accept of our sacrifices, and such duties of thy service and worship as we shall perform unto thee.

This Doctrine is this: When a People or Kingdom, do repent and turn to God for mercy, amend their lives, so as God is conciled

conciled unto them, then doth he accept of their sacrifices, oblations, prayers, &c. being done in faith and repentance : but so long as they live in sin without repentance, the Lord being not reconciled unto them, he esteemeth not of that they do.

Vt. I.

Seeing the Lord doth then accept of a People when they repent, and be reconciled unto God, amend their sinful lives : Let us learn from this Doctrine, that if we desire to have the Gospel continued, our peace prolonged, and the Service and Worship of God to be established, there is no other way but this, to seek to God by true repentance, to get our sins pardoned, and to be at peace with the Almighty.

O then repent and amend, for if you will not repent and amend your works and ways, the Lord our God will not accept of us, nor regard us : *Jer. 7.* yea, he will remove our *Candlestick* from us, *Rev. 2.* that our golden days shall have an end, and our mirth shall be turned into mourning, and light into darkness.

The Sacrifice of Righteousness.

THAT is, such Sacrifices as are done by the prescript Rule of the holy Word, such as God requires, and in that right and lawful manner which he commands in his holy Word. Now the sacrifice of a troubled spirit, is the incense of tears which God did accept at David's hand : for they that sow in tears shall reap in joy, as David did ;

did ; for he found more comfort after his confession than he did before.

Hence we see, what be those sacrifices which the Lord accepteth of in his worship and service, namely, *the sacrifice of righteousness*, that is, lawful sacrifices, allowed and warranted by the Word of God, and such as being lawful, are performed in a right and holy manner, according to the prescript rule of God's Word : but as for the sacrifices which are not warranted by the Word of God, not done in a lawful and holy manner, according to the rules of God's Word, the Lord careth not for them.

Now it may be asked, how *David* can say, *The Lord accepts sacrifices*, seeing in the former Verse he said, *God doth desire no sacrifice*? Now he here affirmeth, that the Lord shall accept the sacrifice of righteousness.

I answer, That such sacrifices as are offered with opinion of merit, as the *Jews* did, who thought by offering a Beast that God was satisfied, and so they might be bold to live in sin, and such as they offered (without faith and repentance) the Lord esteemed not of them. No let every true penitent sinner, like *David*, offer the sacrifice of Prayer and thanksgiving, and of a contrite heart, which is more than all outward sacrifices : for those who do truly repent and become good Christians, are termed or called God's Manuscripts, wherein he writes his Laws, and by them relates his will to others, that is a true sacrifice to have a penitent

Doct. I.
What be
those sacri-
fices that
God doth
accept of.

inent heart. No incense will God accept of, but our true and penitential tears, no sacrifice but prayers, put up to him in faith; no Mediator but his Son, and our only Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the Son of his Love, and the Lamb of his Bosom. God doth not look so much at our actions, as at our affections; for God saith, *Son, give me thy heart*: he desires nothing of thee for all those gifts he hath and doth bestow upon thee from day to day but thy self: therefore if thou wilt give God the best and truest sacrifice, thou must present thy self for that sacrifice: there is nothing better for a sacrifice to present God withal then our heart, nothing better pleasing to him then that: God commands the first-born to be offered to him as a sacrifice, and if we will do that, we must then give him our heart, for that is the first thing that lives within us; other outward sacrifice God is not pleased to accept, because it is corrupt, and God is immortal; and God being immortal, shall we present him with things that are mortal and defiled? Yea, it must be the heart, and a new heart which must be created by repentance; and that must come by our earnest prayer, and a fervent desire to hear the Word of God preached: for out of the heart comes grace and goodness; and out of the body comes only natural infirmities; therefore we must keep our hearts with all care and diligence, for that sacrifice which is performed without the heart, is but a counterfeit and a ceremonious sacrifice, being

ing assured, that the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise.

But here he saith, that God will accept and like of such as are offered in a holy manner, according to the rule of God's Word : that is, when sacrifices commanded of God are offered in a holy manner, as in faith, repentance, and obedience, and not to merit any thing, but as exercises of faith and repentance, and types of Christ Jesus, to lead them unto him, and as testimonies of their thankfulness to God, and so far forth as they served for the furtherance of God's glory, and the edification of his Church.

The Doctrine then is clear, That it is not left to man to ordain and appoint the service and worship of God, to put in what he will, or to put out at his pleasure; but if we will have our sacrifice and worship of God acceptable and truly to please God, we must give the Lord leave to commend and prescribe what he thinketh good, and we must not dare to add any thing of our own, nor to take away his worship and service. *Deut. 12. 8. 32.* we are forbidden to add or take away any thing from his Law, in which he prescribeth the rules of his Worship, *Deut. 32. 17.* When the Jews worship God after their own fancies, the Lord saith, they worship not God but Devils; and the Lord holds it a vain thing to teach his worship and fear by the precepts of man. So then, all such sacrifices

of righteousness be the Worship of God, which he warranted by his Word; and nothing may go under the name of his Service and Worship, but that he prescribes in his Word.

This condemns the greatest part of the Worship of God amongst the Papists, their seven Sacraments, their adoration of Images, and their praying to Saints, their abominable Mass, their voluntary Poverty, and perpetual Chastity; for which they can shew no word of warrant in all the Scriptures: and therefore it is no right sacrifice, and ought to be abhorred.

This meeteth just with the common Christians, all men (though never so vile) will confess God must be adored; but when it is demanded what is the sacrifice that God likes of, then they offer what they list themselves: Some imagine they serve God well with their good meaning, some, by their good doings, and by their good dealings, and civil honest life, so long as they think no harm, nor say none, they think they serve God as well as the best: Some think, if they rehearse and number over the ten Commandments and the Creed for prayers, they serve God highly: but poor souls, is this all you do in God's Service? Is here all the Sacrifice you offer him? It is a cold and slender Sacrifice. Let our Sacrifices which we offer God be first exact and pure; secondly, constant. First, pure, without hypocrite, and undefiled without being mingled with earthly cares; and our hearts like-

likewise free from envy and malice. Secondly; constant we must be in our Sacrifice, not serve God by fits and starts, or when we are at leisure ; this is no true Sacrifice, we ought to do it exactly and with holiness and righteousness as it becomes Christians. In the old Law they offered the Sacrifice of Burnt Offerings, a Lamb without spot or blemish : something was still offered as an Oblation to pacifie God's wrath : now if we cannot offer that Sacrifice of a Lamb without spot or blemish, which is meant our Souls, then let us bring two Turtle Doves with us, that is, our Love and obedience ; for the Turtle Doves are so loving each to other, that they are never asunder : if we cannot offer that Sacrifice, let us bring a pair of young Pigeons, that is, our Sacrifice of a contrite heart, sighing, and sorrowing for our sins ; for Pigeons they are always mourning and sorrowing. If we cannot pray, let us hold up our hands ; if we cannot weep for our sins, let us sigh out our Prayers ; if we cannot sigh, let us labour to humble our selves ; and if we can but do this, then will God accept our Sacrifice, and hear our petition, and send us our desires, even blessings upon blessings, both outward and inward ; outward in our temporal estates, and inward by spiritual and heavenly thoughts to our Souls ; and for the time to come, let us double our care and diligence, and take time while we have it, and take the Balm of Gilead while we have strength to apply it ; for

for no man can work when night comes : when death hath seized us there is no repentance to be looked for, no sacrifice to be offered.

Then shall they offer Calves upon thine Altar.

IN this part of the Verse is shewed what is the fruit of God's mercy in *David* and the People, namely this, that they will promise and covenant with God for their deliverance, to offer unto God praise and thanksgiving.

Dott. 3.
Solemn
Vows a
Christians
duty.

Gen. 28.2
1 Cor. 3.3.
Psal. 116.

Hence we learn, that it is our duty to bind our selves by solemn covenant and promise to God, that if he will deliver us from misery, trouble, affliction, judgment, punishment, and from unreasonable men, that then we will offer him praise and thanksgiving, call upon him, serve and worship him all our days.

Jacob vowed, that if the Lord would be with him in his journey, to keep him, and defend him in it, he would then build a House to God, and worship there. *Joshua* made a covenant unto the Lord, and all the people with him, to serve the Lord, who did deliver him from the curse of the Law. *David* did often use this, to bind himself by a covenant to serve the Lord, *Psal. 116.* he payed his vows he made to God. So *Jephtha*, *Judg. 11.* vowed unto the Lord, that he would offer sacrifice unto the Lord who gave him victory; and though the matter of his vow was unlawful, yet his vow to honour God was the fruit of faith.

Well

Well then, let us make our Use of this Doctrine ; and seeing it is not only lawful, but also our duty, even so to make solemn covenants unto God, that if he will be favourable unto Sion, and build up the Walls of Jerusalem ; that if he shall deliver us from any danger, judgments, afflictions whatsoever, that he will be careful to honour God, to be thankful unto his Divine Majesty. Let us then make this Covenant with the Lord our God, let us vow obedience and newness of life, and let us say with David, I have sworn, and am steadfastly purposed to keep thy righteousness judgments. So let us even take a solemn vow of our own selves, that by the grace of Almighty God we will have more care to laud God, to honour him, to serve him, to call upon him, and accordingly let us be mindful to perform the same ; for the Lord will require all the vows we make unto him.

Use. 2.

Psal. 119.

This may stir us up to remember what a solemn vow and promise we have made in Baptism, to forsake the Devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, that we will forsake the Devil, sin and Satan, so as we will not follow nor be led by them ; yea, that we will manfully fight under the Banner of Christ Jesus, and become his faithful Soldiers and Servants unto our lives end.

This is the Covenant which we have made every one of us in our Baptism and entrance into the house of the Lord, before the presence of God and his holy Angels, before the

Congregation and Church of God : But (alas) we break it every day, and have neither care nor conscience to keep it. Well, let us know, the Lord will one day require our Covenants and Vows which we have made unto him : He looketh that we should as well keep them as make them. Well then, wouldest thou be loath to break thy Vow, Covenant or Promise made to an honest man, especially being in thine own power to keep it, and such a promise as the keeping whereof may procure thee much peace, liberty and freedom ? I know you would : O then let us be as careful to keep promise with God, and to renounce the world, the Devil our Enemy, and our sinful lusts, and let us be like *David*, to cross the Devils snares and temptations ; and let our bodies be no more the receptacles of sin and transgression, which is the cause why our Souls cannot hear the sweet harmony of the blessed Angels, which if we labour so to do, we shall bring much honour to the Lord Almighty, and everlasting good to our own Souls.

Doct. 3.
A. publick
thanksgiv-
ing after
delive-
rance re-
quired.

And last of all we learn hence, that as it is the duty of every Christian man and woman to pray both publick and private for the safety and good estate of the Church ; so likewise it is our duty publickly to render thanks unto the Lord for deliverance bestowed upon the same. We may not be like to the nine Lepers, who have wide mouths to beg, but neither heart nor mouth to give thanks for benefits received. It hath ever

ever been the care and religious custom of God's Church and People, after great and notable deliverances from visible and common judgments, to render hearty and earnest thanks to God in solemn and publick manner, Gen. 8. when Noah and his Sons and Family were newly delivered from perishing in the Flood, the first thing he did, he builded an Altar, offered sacrifice, and called on the Name of the Lord. So Moses and the children of Israel, after their deliverance out of Egypt, when they were safe, and their enemies drowned, did devoutly and publickly sing praise and thanks unto the Lord. Deborah and Barak did the like, Judg. 5. And the Jews being delivered from Hamans treason, Hebr. 10. they rejoice and keep a solemn day to sing praise unto God.

Well, let us bring this Doctrine to our selves : we are by God's blessing the true Church and People of God, professing the Gospel of Jesus Christ truly, hating all superstition and idolatry, and for this cause we cannot want many enemies. The Papists, the most subtle, cruel and malitious enemy of God's Church, have often set upon us, assaulting us, sought to have invaded our King and Country, as in Eighty Eight, by sundry treasons to murther our late Queen of famous and blessed memory, and to destroy our gracious King and Queen and all his Royal posterity. But among the rest, and above all the rest, none comparable to that last treason, which was most close and in

in subtlety wrought, a long time in hatching, most bloody and devilish, most barbarous and savage, threatening and seeking to destroy and root our King, Council, Spiritual and Temporal Magistrates, aiming at the utter subversion of our *English* Nation, both Church and Commonwealth.

And surely if we consider well of it, I do not see in all the Bible the like deliverance so wonderful and admirable.

1. Being so long a time in hatching and contriving, with such secrecy and concealment.

2. Being under the ground, in Hell, as it were, in a place under the earth, desiring darkness more than light, because the deed was evil.

3. Being brought so near the execution of it, and never known nor suspected before.

4. Being discover'd so strangely, even by one of the Traitors themselves, one of the chief Actors in that Tragedy.

5. Being so general, so fearful and so monstrous, as it should not have been to the destruction of one or two, but of the chief of the whole Land, King, Queen, Prince, Nobles, Judges, Bishops, in a word, the Flower of the Kingdom; the want of any one whereof were a blemish to a State, and would bring a ruine to a Kingdom.

Now do as *Abashuerus* did, Hist. 6. 1. cause the Records to be read, and Chronicles to be searched, Ancient and Modern, Divine or Prophane, amongst the Turks or Pagans;

Pagans ; yes, if Hell keep any Records, search there ; and see if you can pattern this Conspiracy or matchless danger.

But there is no council against the Lord ; man's wisdom is foolishness unto him, his greatest strength but weakness, his life but a breath, and his honour but a blast.

So then we see we have as great cause to render thanks unto the Lord as any People or Nation under Heaven. The fifth day of November is a day to be remembred, and never to be forgotten ; a glad and joyful day, and we ought every one in publick and private to rouse and stir up our hearts in thanksgiving unto the Lord ; for it was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Such a Plot, and such a deliverance it was, that the like was never heard of. We may read in the Scripture of sundry Deliverances, yet not of such a one as this : surely this horrible Plot was hatched in Hell. We may likewise read, that God did send down fire from Heaven to destroy Sodom and Gomorah ; but of a fire out of the earth to burn and blow up a whole State, I never read of ; this surely must needs be from Hell. This day was such a day, that I hope will never be forgotten by our posterity : for if it be, as the Papists do labour and study exceedingly for to do, perswading the younger sort that are under their tuition that there was no such Plot or Conspiracy, and that no such thing was ever intended by any of their Religion, only a trick (as they say) put upon a company of younger Brothers,

to

to sacrifice some malitious and envious humours which were their enemies; so that, I say, If this days solemnity were not enacted by the High Court of Parliament, and the whole Body of the Kingdom, that it should be observed and kept holy, they should as they do still, labour to bring to pass that in a few years space it might be forgotten: which if we neglect to remember, to give God thanks, as I have said, by our Prayers and Alms, the very Fowls in the Air will one day witness against us for our ungrateful and unthankful generation. The Papists boast and brag much of Saint Peter for their Guide and Director, which if they did but imitate and follow him, they would not do as they do, but be of his mind, for he was humble and meek: but now they have left Saint Peter, and practise *Saint-Peter*, as they would have done, witness the fifth of November, and that likewise of Eighty Eight. Is this to follow Saint Peters Religion and direction? they may well brag of Saint Peter's Chair, but whether they can of his Charity; judge ye, my Brethren, yea or no: for their Religion is Rebellion, to kill Princes, to stab and poison Kings and Queens; their Treaties with other Nations are only treacheries, faunings, and dissemblings; their matches will over-match us, if we do not look to them, better then with Match and Gunpowder, which (as I say) was laid as this day forty five years, to have blown the whole Power and Strength of this Kingdom up

up into the Air like Atoms and Flies in the Sun ; take but notice, if ever you read in Chronicle or History of the Butchery of Kings, the deposing of Princes, the Martyrdom of Religious Protestants, but still a Papist and a Jesuit had a hand in the plotting and devising of it ; then judge whether their Religion be grounded upon God's Word, or from any Sacred Writ, yea or no, or whether they have any warrant for this their dissembling and disgulping their Religion with a Cloak of Knavery and Envy, as they do being assembled together in one place. It is the day which the Lord made for the glory of his Name, let us rejoice and be glad in it. For God brought and delivered us out of the Egyptian Bondage upon this day ; nay, our Church and Country too from a day of Darkness and Idolatry, to a day of Light and Sun-shine of the Gospel. Some of us had not been living at this day, if their bondage and plot had effected : God this day secured us from other Masters, that we might serve him ; and for this ought not we to render thanks and praises ? yea, or else let our tongues cleave to the roofs of our mouths.

Now, it is not enough to keep that day as an idle holy-day, to rest from labour and work, to ring Bells, and make Bonfire, to give our selves to eating, and drinking, and swill, to sport and pastime, for this is no honour unto God.

I. But first, our thankfulness must appear in a most reverend and grateful com-

me-

memoration and remembrance of this so great and wonderful a deliverance ; we must call it to mind, think of the greatness of it; we must declare it to our children and posterity, that when they shall ask the reason of it, we may cause and call upon them to be thankful : for the child that is unborn is bound to laud God for it, *Exod. 12.9.* O taste, saith St. Gregory, the Word of Life with the Palliate of thy Heart, and remember how good and gracious the Lord hath been unto us and our Nation, and what deliverance he had done for us sinful men : what shall we then repay the Lord for his benefits ? but only return him by a living sacrifice praise and thanksgiving. And therefore let us daily ascend Heaven by our meditations, lest at the last day we descend the contrary.

Secondly, we must sing Psalms of Praise and Thanksgiving unto God in token of thankfulness, and that publickly in the Church and Congregation of God's People.

Thirdly, We must come together into God's House, to hear his Word and to call upon his Name, and that is a special part of our unsign'd thankfulness. O how many men in these our dangerous and sinful times live, and do nothing on the Sabbath day, spending it after their own desires ! how many in this Kingdom on this day, make their Chambers their Chappels, their Beds their Pew, their Snoring their Devotion, their Cook their Preacher, their Belly their God, new Cloaths their Law and Delight, and spend their time only in inventing what will please their

their humours. O I fear, my beloved, we have many of these sins laid to our charge in these our evil days, which God in his mercy cause every one to be heartily sorry for them. We have even surfeited with the good things of the land, as peace, plenty, and many other blessings we have enjoyed these fifty years.

Fourthly, we must testify our thankfulness in most hearty and dutiful obedience, which is the greatest and best sacrifice, *1 Sam. 15.* and if this be wanting, then all we do is nothing worse, *Esa. 29. 13.* So that for our general deliverance, there should be a general thanksgiving in a general reformation of the Church and Commonwealth of our hearts and sinful lives; otherwise indeed we are unthankful, if still we live in sin and rebellion; then (notwithstanding our keeping a day, ringing of Bells, sport and play) if there follow no reformation of our lives we may justly fear a more dreadful judgment, if not utter ruin and desolation to follow. Now alas, where is this use of God's mercy and our deliverance? where do the people reform their lives, reform their ways, grow more religious, conscientious and careful to hear, read, pray in their families? It is but a wonder of nine days, men make little or no use of it, but to talk of it, and speak of it. O let us not be so careless of our own good, but use our best endeavour for the amendment of our lives. Which that all estates and degrees of men may do, the Lord grant for his mercy's sake. Amen.

A Morning Prayer for a FAMILY.

Lord teach us to pray, that we may call upon thy Name : prepare our hearts to seek thee, and open thou thy merciful ears to hear us.

O Eternal and ever-living Lord God, Creator and continual Preserver of all things both in Heaven and in Earth ; by whose gracious providence as we were at the first wonderfully and fearfully made, so we are no less preserved and kept unto this present. We here, the workmanship of thine own hands, desire to humble both Soul and Body before thee. And now, Lord, we being here in thy presence, cannot but acknowledg and confess against our selves our own unworthiness to come before thee, to call upon thee, or to perform even the least duty that shall concern thy worship or glory. Our hearts, alas, are no better then sinks of sin, and a mass of pollution and uncleanness : and who can make that clean that is taken out of any unclean thing ? The thoughts and imaginations of the same must needs be evil continually, and we unto every good work prove reprobates. Yet, O Lord, seeing thou hast commanded us to call upon thee, and hast mer-

mercifully promised to be present with thy children, to hear their prayers, and to grant their requests which they put up in faith unto thee : O Lord, this doth give us boldness to come before thee, and in confidence of thy goodness that thou wilt make good the same thy promise unto us at this time, we here offer up unto thee this morning sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, humbly acknowledging and confessing from the bottom of our hearts our manifold transgressions and offences, which we have continually multiplyed against thee, in thought, word, and deed, from the beginning of our days unto this present time. We acknowledg, O Lord, that our original corruption in the which we were at the first conceived and born, and from which there hath sprung forth the most bitter and unsavoury fruit of sin, apostacy and rebellion, to the great dishonour of thy Name, the wounding of our poor souls' and consciences, and the evil examples of others amongst whom we have lived ; by the which, O God, we confess that we have justly deserved that thy wrath and indignation should be poured out upon us, both in this life and in the life to come.

And therefore, O God, we come not here before thee in our own worthiness ; but in the worthiness and mediation of Jesus Christ : beseeching thy gracious goodness for his sake to forgive all our offences, our visible sins, our secret sins, our sins of infirmity, our presumptuous sins, against know-

knowledg, against Conscience, against Thee, against our Brethren, in the time of our younger years, or in the days of our knowledg, as we must needs confess, that in many things we have sinned all. We pray thee, O God, for Christ Jesus sake, to forgive the same unto us, and persuade our souls and consciences more and more, that thou art at peace with us, and that all our sins are done away in the blood of thy Son; and grant O God, by the assistance and direction, of the same thy Spirit, that with more freedom of mind and liberty of will, we may serve thee in righteousness and true holiness unto the end of our days. And, good Lord, begin not only repentance and true conversion in us, but of thy great mercy perfect the same. O lead us forward more and more towards perfection, increase in us our saving knowledg of thee, and of thy Son Christ, our faith in thy promises, our repentance from dead works, our fear of thy holy Name, our hatred of all our sins, and our love of thy truth. Frame our weak hearts (good Lord) more and more into obedience unto thy holy and heavenly will, and teach us in all things to resign our wills unto thy holy will, and in time of affliction, as in time of prosperity to depend upon thee; that we may not look too much upon our own weakness, but may stay our selves by thy power and promises.

And, good Lord, comfort our sorrowful hearts and dejected souls, that find daily such

such cause and humiliation in our selves, doing daily those things which we should not, and leaving undone those good things thou commandest : O then let us be truly humbled for the same, and for thy mercies sake give us better affections unto goodness, and power and ability to do that good thou commandest and requirest at our hands : that seeking in all good things to honour thee, and to extol thy name while we live here, we may at the last behold thy face in glory.

And now, Lord, together with our prayers, we are bold to add these praises to thy great Name, for the manifold favours and blessings, the which from time to time thou hast bestowed upon us for this life, especially for a better life. We thank thee for that it hath pleased thee of thy gracious goodness to elect and chose us to salvation before the world was ; for calling us by thy word in time, for justifying us by thy Son Christ, and for giving us a certain expectation of a better Life when this is ended : As also for the happy means of our salvation, thy Sabbaths, Word, and Sacraments. Oh, it is thy great goodness, O Lord, that thou hast not deprived us of them all, in as much as we have from time to time walked so unworthy of thy love. O lay not to our charge our great unthankfulness, that we have not brought forth more fruit of thy Word in our lives, but give us, we pray thee, that for the time to come we may make more right steps to thy Kingdom. And we magnifie thy Name, O Lord, for all

all the temporal blessings which thou hast in mercy bestowed upon our health, peace, food, rayment, and for all the comforts of this life : O Lord, give us a right use of them that we may not abuse them unto Licentiousness, but stir us daily by them to devote our selves unto thee and thy service. We acknowledge thy goodness towards us the night that now is past, freeing us from many imminent dangers both of soul and body, and giving us sweet and comfortable rest. We beseech thee to be with us this day, and all the days of our lives, and teach us to walk as children of the light, that thy Name may be glorified by us, others may take good example, and we our selves enjoy the peace of a good conscience, so as at the last we may come to reign with thee in glory.

Bless the Churches and Kingdoms wherein we live with the continuance of our peace and true Religion ; be gracious unto the King and Queen, and all the Royal Progeny. Bless all others in Authority, the Ministers of thy Word, our afflicted Brethren, in Body, or Mind, or both ; let it please thee, O Lord, to stay them, and support them in time of their distress, and give unto them a happy issue out of the same, as it shall seem good unto thee. And fit us for harder times whosoever it shall please thee to bring the same upon us ; and keep us, Lord, in those days by thy mighty power. And thus have we commended our suits unto thee, humbly praying thee to pardon our wants

now

now at this time in the performance of this duty : and thou that art privy to our wants better then we our selves are, we pray thee to take notice of them, and minister unto us a gracious supply in thy own due time, even for Jesus Christ's sake, in whose Name we conclude these our weak and imperfect prayers, in that perfect form of Prayer which he himself hath further taught us, saying, *Our Father which art in Heaven,* &c.

Evening

Evening Prayer for a FAMILY.

O Lord prepare our hearts to Prayer.

O Eternal God, and our most loving and merciful Father in Jesus Christ, and in Christ our Father : it is thy own commandment that we should call upon thy Name, and it is thy gracious and merciful promise, that where two or three are gathered together in thy Name, there thou wilt be present among them. We thy poor and unworthy servants, dust and ashes, yet the workmanship of thy own hands, are now bold to come before thee to offer up unto thee this Evening Sacrifice of Prayer and Thanksgiving. And now, O Lord, being here before thee, we cannot but acknowledge and confess, even from the bottom of our hearts, against our selves, our own unworthiness, that we are grievous sinners, conceived in sin, and born in iniquity, and whereof we have brought forth most vile fruits in our lives, to the great dishonour of thy Name, the utter dismaying of our own consciences, and the evil example of our Brethren ; by the which we have deserved likewise thy wrath and heavy indignation should be poured upon us, both in this

this life and that which is to come, in such sort as no treasure in Heaven and Earth is able to reconcile us again to thy Majesty, but only thy Son Jesus Christ. We intreat thee therefore, O Lord, to be merciful unto us; and as we acknowledg our sins unto thee, so be thou faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Wash us throughly from our wickedness, and cleanse us from our sins; for we acknowledg, O Lord, that against thee we have sinned and done our evils in thy sight. Thou hast been a guide unto all our ways, who alone art the searcher of the heart, and the trier of the reins: to thee therefore, O Lord, do we come to crave the pardon of our sins, both for the guilt and punishment of the same, that so they may not draw down upon us our deserved judgment. And we intreat thee likewise, as to pardon our sins that are past in our lives, so to arm and strengthen us against sin for the time to come. Oh! we have woful experience in our selves of the ~~want~~ ^{weakness} of our nature, how ready we are to fall from thee, and cannot keep so constant a watch over our ways, nor over our own hearts, but still are ready to start aside. O Lord, direct us aright in the paths of thy Commandments let thy good Spirit lead us forth into all truth, and these hearts of ours that are by nature so fraught with sin and wickedness, we pray thee alter and change, and bring into subjection daily every thought, and whatsoever thing else is in us,

into faithful obedience unto Christ : let us find daily more and more the power of Christ's death mortifying sin in us, and the efficacy of his Resurrection, raising us daily out of the grave of sin unto newness of life; and give us, Lord, that we may dedicate our selves, our souls and bodies to be lively, holy, and acceptable sacrifices unto thee. Let thy love shewed unto us, constrain us to love thee again, who first loved us. Thou, O Lord, hast made us, and not we our selves, thou hast made us not beasts, but men and women, yea, after thine own Image ; thou didst preserve us in our Mothers womb, and didst nourish us when we did hang upon the breast : thou hast still in mercy provided for us, and heaped upon us many blessings, which others want and stand in need of. O Lord, grant us a right use of all thy mercies, especially for that thou hast let us live in such a happy season of thy Gospel, in a time of peace and prosperity, wherein thou dost by thy Word continually call at the dore of our hearts, and labourest for our conversion, O Lord, we can never sufficiently admire thy goodness herein, and the rather, because we have from time to time walked so unworthy of thy love. Forgive us, O Lord, our unthankfulness herein, and let us now walk as children of the light. O it is too much, Lord, that we have spent the time that is past according to the lusts of the flesh : give us grace that we may spend that short time that yet remaineth according to thy will ; set before our eyes the short-

shortness of our lives, the day of death is sure in the end, unsure in the time, that we may be fully prepared for that second coming of our Saviour unto Judgment. And now in the time of our prosperity, Lord teach us to think of the time of adversity, and in the time of our health, let us remember the time of sickness; and the hour of death, which shall come upon all flesh. O let us be mindful of our latter end, let us number our days aright, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom, and ever mind that reckoning and account which one day we shall give unto thee. Make us while we live here to be humble-minded toward our brethren, that we be lowly in our own eyes, that we get contented hearts, pure affections, chaste minds, and wise behaviours, and all other gifts of thine own Spirit, that may adorn us in thy sight, and may add unto the credit of the truth we profess.

And, good Lord, we pray thee accept of our thanksgiving unto thy Majesty for all thy mercies and blessings from time to time bestowed upon us for this life and ~~for~~ better. We praise thee for our election, vocation, justification, sanctification, continual preservation, and the assurance that thou hast given us of a better life when this is ended: as also for all temporal blessings, health, wealth, peace and prosperity; for thy goodness extended towards us for this day past, that thou hast gone in and out before us, and freed us from many dangers of soul and body, and brought us with peace and comfort.

fort unto the beginning of that night. Lord, watch over us by thy Spirit and preserve us in a holy and sanctified use of our rest and sleep, and fit us for the duties of the next day : especially, O Lord, fit us for that day which shall never give place to night, and grant unto us all good things that thou in thy wisdom knowest more expedient to give than we so ask, even for Jesus Christ's sake : to whom with thee, O Father, together with the blessed Spirit, we acknowledg to be due, and desire to give all honour, and praise, and glory, both now and for ever. Amen.

F I N I S.

